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New York

President:	Mr. Rycroft	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mrs. Hambisa
	France	Ms. Rossignol
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Ms. Abylkassymova
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Ms. Regnér
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsya
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices

Letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/198)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices

Letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/198)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion. I would particularly like to thank the Secretary-General, all our briefers, all of our Ministers and all other speakers for their flexibility as we had to move the debate from yesterday to today because of the snowstorm. I am also extremely grateful to the Secretariat and to my own team for their innovative planning.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Colombia, Côte D'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Djibouti, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Ilwad Elman, of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre; and Mr. Kevin Hyland, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Fedotov is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Vienna, and Ms. Elman is joining via video-teleconference from Mogadishu.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; Ms. Urmila Bhoola, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, including its Causes and Consequences; Her Excellency Ms. Madina Jarbussynova, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; His Excellency Ms. Joanne Adamson, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Mr. Emmanuel Roux, Special Representative of the INTERPOL to the United Nations; Mr. Houtan Homayounpour, Senior Forced Labour Specialist, International Labour Organization; and Mr. Ashraf El Nour, Director, of the International Maritime Organization Office to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/198, which contains a letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United Kingdom for convening this meeting. which builds on last December's adoption of the far-reaching resolution 2331 (2016), targeting human trafficking in conflict situations. Allow me to start with a short personal reflection.

I come from a country that, for centuries, engaged in the cruel trade in human beings. It is part of our history that we will never allowed to be forgotten. Of

course, Portugal ultimately outlawed slavery in the nineteenth century, and a global norm against it has now long been in place. Indeed, the very conscience of the United Nations was shaped by that disgraceful violation of human dignity.

I wish that I could say that human trafficking is a thing of the past. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Trafficking networks have gone global. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), victims can be found in 106 countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that 21 million people around the world are victims of forced labour and extreme exploitation. Annual profits are estimated to be $150 billion. Beyond these numbers is the human toll: the lives cut short, the families and societies torn apart, and the gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Human trafficking takes many forms. Women and girls in particular are targeted again and again and again. We see brutal sexual exploitation, including forced prostitution, forced marriage and sexual slavery. We see the appalling trade in human organs. Let us also remember that modern manifestations of servitude may touch and even implicate us all. Global supply chains have transformed many lives for the better, but not always without cost. In some situations, clothes, food, smartphones, jewelry and other consumer goods may bear, wittingly or unwittingly, the traces of exploitation. Gleaming new skyscrapers may owe some of their shine to the sweat of bonded laborers.

Human trafficking thrives where the rule of law is weak or non-existent. Situations of armed conflict are especially virulent breeding grounds for human trafficking. In some of today's conflicts, we are confronted by armed groups that not only openly engage in enslavement and forced labour, but actually argue that it is legal. In Syria, Da'esh has organized slave markets and even published manuals instructing its fighters on how to capture, control and trade enslaved women and girls. The leaders of Boko Haram have also argued that slavery is legal. In other conflicts, other groups force men, women and children under their control to labour in unsafe mines, as porters and domestic servants, and on the frontlines.

Fleeing these threats, refugees and displaced people confront new ones. As people take to the road, predators take advantage. Smugglers often coerce and manipulate individuals for profit and make them victims of sex or labour trafficking. Terrorists and violent extremists use sexual enslavement as a tool for recruitment. Drug traffickers use kidnapping and ransom to finance their operations, and criminal gangs force unaccompanied children into a life of petty crime.

Moreover, impunity prevails. According to the UNODC December 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, there are hardly any convictions for crimes related to human trafficking in conflict situations or elsewhere. The lack of aggressive investigations and prosecutions only adds to the injustice, allows perpetrators to function without fear, fuels corruption and creates widespread disillusion. Allow me to make another personal reflection in that regard.

I remember that when I worked in Government, I never expected my two children to be victims of trafficking, but I always was afraid of the impact of drugs on their lives. I think that is the same with most political leaders around the world. Most political leaders around are afraid of the impact of drugs on their families, but they do not think it likely that their families will be impact by human trafficking. That is probably why we have seen much greater priority given to fighting drug traffickers than to fighting the traffickers of human beings. Of course, drug trafficking is an awful crime, but to traffic in human beings is, I must, much worse. I believe that it is our duty to really commit ourselves to doing everything we can to make this a clear priority for all Governments and in all forms of international cooperation.

There is much that we can do both to punish human trafficking and to prevent it in the first place. A solid legal and normative framework is in place, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, which includes the first internationally agreed definition of the crime of trafficking in persons and provides a framework for effectively preventing and combatting it. ILO conventions and the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons complement the Protocol, and are further key parts of the picture. All of these build on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under the under the Rome Statue, enslavement can constitute a crime against humanity.

United Nations military and civilian personnel must also be held accountable to these standards. I continue to take steps to strengthen our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse

committed under the United Nations flag. Since human trafficking does not respect borders, Member States need to strengthen cooperation on law enforcement, investigations and intelligence-sharing. We also need to strengthen coordination among Member States, civil society, the business community and United Nations entities, including through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons. At the same time, we need to get at the underlying vulnerabilities that fuel this phenomenon, for example by empowering girls through education, by respecting the rights of minorities and by establishing safe and legal channels of migration.

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development can also help us break the chains of exploitation. Three of the goals explicitly address human trafficking, including sex trafficking, forced labour, child labour and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. As we engage the private sector as a key partner in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to ensure it takes greater responsibility when sourcing from conflict areas. Better data will be crucial. Funding is critical. The United Nations is also committed not only to supporting victims, but to incorporating their voices and views as we develop and implement anti-trafficking interventions.

Finally, at a time of divisions in so many areas, this should be an issue that can unite us. Let us come together around the key issues of prosecution, protection and prevention, and thereby build a future without human trafficking.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his powerful briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: My thanks go to the Security Council and to the United Kingdom presidency for their unflagging attention to the crime of human trafficking in conflict situations.

We continue to witness criminals and terrorists exploiting instability and vulnerability. As the Secretary-General has just observed, human trafficking thrives where the rule of law is weak or non-existent. Armed groups are engaging in human trafficking, capturing and coercing young girls and boys into sexual slavery or to be used as child soldiers. Organized-crime networks are preying on the many thousands of people on the move.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* confirms that migrants from countries with a high level of organized crime, or that are affected by conflicts, are more vulnerable to trafficking, as well as violence, abuse and other forms of exploitation. As conflict displaces countless people, as the rule of law breaks down and as cooperation between countries falters, criminals see a clear business opportunity. For organized crime networks, human trafficking is a low-risk, high-reward criminal business — a perception that is reinforced by the inexcusably low conviction rates still reported around the world. States can, and must, do more to prevent people from falling victim to traffickers. To protect those exploited, and to hold criminals to account, they could take some concrete, immediate steps.

First, there is a clear need to make the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against Trafficking in Persons more operational. That means developing comprehensive legal frameworks to encourage and facilitate cross-border cooperation and responses to human trafficking and the organized crime that perpetuates it. It also means putting in place a mechanism that would allow for a review of the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols.

Secondly, some countries' national laws may apply to the actions of their citizens abroad, including in conflict zones, which could be used to bring perpetrators to justice.

Thirdly, anti-trafficking laws should not only criminalize trafficking but also provide for the protection and support of victims.

Fourthly, countries must devote more resources to identifying and assisting victims, tailored to the challenges of conflict zones and large movements of refugees and migrants.

Fifthly, we must continue building capacities to improve criminal justice responses and action to detect, investigate and successfully prosecute cases of human trafficking.

In October, Member States will appraise the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which the Secretary-General mentioned and which the General Assembly adopted in 2010 to support the implementation of the Protocol and to coordinate

national responses. That event offers a chance to discuss and advance efforts against trafficking in conflict situations, and I hope members will take advantage of that opportunity. I also hope that Member States, the private sector and all those concerned will help us provide a much higher level of direct assistance through the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, a facility that was established under the Global Plan of Action.

As always, UNODC remains engaged in supporting members to improve responses to human trafficking. We are assisting with the identification and protection of trafficking victims among refugees and displaced persons. We are helping to build capacities to disrupt organized crime and terrorist groups, including through intelligence sharing, financial investigations and coordination within and across borders. We are working with our United Nations partners, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to mainstream responses to human trafficking in efforts to address the conflict cycle. Furthermore, UNODC is seeking to strengthen United Nations coordination through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. UNODC and its partners will hold a Group briefing to Member States in New York on Friday, which I hope members will attend.

Clearly, international responses to human trafficking continue to fall short, and we cannot accept the status quo. The best way we can swiftly improve action against trafficking and protect the vulnerable is to fully implement and make use of the frameworks we have worked so hard to build and more effectively deploy the tools we have painstakingly crafted to confront human trafficking in all its forms. As the Secretary-General has so eloquently said, this is an issue that can, and should, unite us. The Security Council's continued support for our work is essential.

The President: I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Elman.

Ms. Elman: The scale of human trafficking in Somalia is devastating. What is even more disturbing is that, despite the widespread systemic enslavement of people, it is not constituted as a crime against a person or a crime against humanity in my country. Rather, it is normalized by virtue of circumstance. Forced labour in conflict is rarely viewed as slavery, and it is the selective understanding of modern slavery is that creates space for this crime to thrive, and why it continues to remain low on the priority list during humanitarian crises globally.

The world is facing the largest humanitarian crisis right now, with more than 20 million people, in four countries, at risk of starvation, Somalia being one of them. On the heels of a recent visit to Somalia by the Secretary-General, who called for urgent and immediate action to alleviate the situation, we note that there is a very high probability of a recurrence of the famine that caused more than 260,000 people to starve to death across the country in 2011. I am afraid we have not learned much since then. We did not prepare and we did not plan. And so here we are again.

In the same way that we were blind to the signs of a drought and famine unfolding before us, we are still blind to what undignified contexts of such desperation do to the affected population. In 2011, the majority of those whom my organization was assisting were internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in hovels in makeshift camps in Mogadishu and its outskirts, primarily women with children in tow, or child-headed households — people who had tracked by foot for days to make it to the capital in order to receive some sort of humanitarian aid. On arrival and on route, they were sexually abused, tortured and extorted for what little they had in their possession. Some of their family members never made it, as they died along the way.

Within the IDP camps in Mogadishu, sexual abuse became rampant, and a culture of impunity created opportunities for it to remain so. Women and girls were forced into transactional labour, such as sex for food, sex for medical aid, sex for protection and sex to pass checkpoints and to reach distribution sites. A 14-year-old refugee from Yemen who ended up in an IDP camp in Mogadishu, along with her elderly father and younger siblings, is currently staying at one of our safe houses after escaping a forced marriage — one that was offered as a solution to the extreme poverty her family was living in. Her small dowry, of $20, became a lifeline for the rest of the family. She did not leave her family to be a wife, she became a sex slave. The house became a brothel. For three months, her father received $20 from the man he gave her to, without any contact with his daughter. He did not know that the man was charging other men to have sex with his daughter, or that the money he was receiving was a product of her enslavement. The abuse continued for nine months before she escaped. Human trafficking is severely

exacerbated in situations of conflict and extremist groups like Al-Shabaab, Da'esh and Boko Haram survive off of the forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual slavery they inflict on the civilians living in chaos of conflict.

Last month at the General Assembly here in New York I commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the children-in-armed conflict mandate. I spoke about what has been achieved in the past two decades. Last week I met with a father of one of the children in our programme with whom we were planning an exit strategy for his son. His son was forcibly recruited by Al-Shabaab and, after being apprehended by security forces on front lines, he was handed over to our care and placed in our programme for children disassociated from armed groups. His son has been with us for nearly a year now. His father begged us to keep his son safe because, just days prior to our meeting, Al-Shabaab militants went to his home and demanded that he hand over his remaining, 10-year-old, son. When the father appealed to keep his son, he was told that he would have to either hand over his son, supply them with arms or pay a monthly fee of $30. What options but to provide labour to terrorists or criminal organizations do communities living in the mix of disaster, extreme poverty, oppression and conflict have? The father is living in conditions of slavery in which he has been forced to service the armed group in order to save his son.

The same children who are forced into armed groups and manage to escape and surrender to Government security forces are then forced into labour again, only to be used as informants by Government security forces. All parties to the conflict in Somalia are guilty of forced labour and enslavement in some way. Through my work with survivors of sexual and gender based violence, I know that women and girls, as it relates to human trafficking in conflict, are primarily viewed as victims — the spoils of war given the forced temporary marriage, sexual slavery, impregnation by militants and abandonment or ostracizing from their communities, which are all too rampant. This has introduced many gender-specific constraints in the reintegration process for women and girls when the conflict subsides.

Another role that women play in human trafficking that is often overlooked is that of perpetrators, organizers and mobilizers of trafficking. We have worked on exposing numerous small organized operations led by women who prey on the most destitute segments of society — such as those living in IDP camps — and go to IDP communities with the promise of employment, food, clothing and anything else to draw in the desperate. The most worrisome part of human trafficking in Somalia is that, because of the conflict, people are not even aware of the real risk and how to protect themselves and their children from it. Because of weak governance, the south and central regions of Somalia are now used as transit routes for international trafficking, while other parts of the country are regions of destination, transit and origin for victims of international human trafficking, as well as local trafficking between the regions.

Local trafficking and forced labour mostly affect women and girls in Somalia in the domestic work sector. The victims are mainly women and young children, and most are trafficked for domestic work, forced prostitution and, as recent reports indicate, even organ removal. Conflict and insecurity breed desperation, and traffickers present themselves as a ticket out of all of that. Dismantling the operations of trafficking networks has been mostly unsuccessful in Somalia, with the majority of interventions focused on rescue, negotiations of release and reactionary approaches, as opposed to prevention. Yet organized networks are accessible. Their contact persons are traceable, and a testament to how a 17-year-old boy or a 16-year-old girl knows exactly who to reach and can find a way to get out of Somalia through a perilous journey facilitated by a trafficker who takes them via the sea and to Libya with the promise of reaching Europe or elsewhere one day.

The information is there but the intent, resources and the strategy for ending human trafficking in conflict have not been at an adequate level. Communities are not informed well enough to know that traffickers masquerading as employment prospects are leading them down a fatal path. More often than not, those who were forced into sexual slavery are left with false promises of employment abroad and then further exploited for debt bondage and other forced labour. Very recently, that has also extended to include military service.

I urge the Security Council and its members to use the authority and legitimacy of the Council to denounce human trafficking in conflict, reinforce global norms against it, counter the emerging narrative that normalizes slavery in conflict and promote accountability. I urge the Security Council and its members to report on efforts to

better implement existing mechanisms for countering trafficking in persons in general, not limiting it only to conflict. Finally, I conclude by emphasizing the need to strengthen the capacity of the relevant officials likely to encounter and identify possible victims of trafficking in persons, which includes civil society organizations at the grassroots level.

The President: I thank Ms. Elman for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hyland.

Mr. Hyland: As the United Kingdom's first appointed Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, my role is to spearhead the United Kingdom's efforts to tackle modern slavery, both domestically and internationally. We are here today in recognition of the fact that conflict has become a major driver of modern slavery across the globe. Terrorist organizations openly advocate slavery as a tactic of war. Da'esh has targeted minority groups for forced labour and sexual exploitation. It has established slave markets where women and children are sold with a price tag attached.

Conflict also produces an environment that enables modern slavery to flourish. Erosion of the rule of law enables transnational trafficking networks to act with impunity. Conflict results in the displacement of vulnerable people who are then targeted by the traffickers. The wars in Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia alone are responsible for more than half the world's refugees. The number of displaced people has risen to 65 million, the largest figure ever recorded. Men, women and children fleeing conflict are extremely vulnerable to numerous forms of modern slavery, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and even organ trafficking. The European Police Office has confirmed that traffickers are increasingly targeting refugees in the European Union. Nearly half of all refugees are children, many of whom are unaccompanied, and therefore especially vulnerable.

I met Sarah, a 15-year-old Eritrean girl, at a reception camp in Lampedusa. Sarah had been kidnapped and held for three months in Libya in a so-called connection house, where she was sexually exploited multiple times every day. In October last year, the International Organization for Migration reported that over 70 per cent of all migrants moving from North Africa to Europe had experienced exploitation and human trafficking, mainly in Libya. A modern-day slave trade is now booming in Libya. Political, military and social conditions have created an environment where traffickers have thrived.

Militias are subjecting migrants to forced labour and sexual exploitation in detention centres until they pay off a ransom to allow passage to Europe. Those centres are forced labour camps, set up to profit from the organized exploitation of migrants. Long-established transnational organized crime groups are also using power vacuums caused by conflict to increase their trafficking operations. For example, for decades, transnational traffickers have operated in southern Nigeria, deceiving victims with false promises of better lives in Europe. But what was a trickle has now become a flow. Such criminals are taking advantage of conflict and instability in the Lake Chad basin and Libya and have massively scaled up their trafficking operations by utilizing those now-ungoverned routes.

In 2016, just over 11,000 Nigerian women arrived in Italy from Libya. That is as an eightfold increase from the numbers arriving in 2014. The International Organization for Migration believes that 80 per cent are trafficking victims destined for brothels across Europe. I have visited Edo state, the main region where traffickers source their victims. This trafficking is especially brutal in nature. Women who insist they will not work as prostitutes are tied up in a position called "the crocodile". Their hands are tied to their feet and they are left for days without food or water. Some are left to die as an example to others. The Government of the United Kingdom recently announced at least £5 million aimed at work in partnership with Nigeria to help tackle this trafficking at the source.

Prime Minister Theresa May has committed the United Kingdom to international leadership in combating modern slavery. Unless those behind the trade in human lives are pursued and punished, vulnerable people will continue to be sourced, used, abused and replaced, and be treated as mere commodities. I therefore urge international organizations and Member States, and in particular the law-enforcement and intelligence agencies, to prioritize efforts to strengthen cross-border collaboration aimed at investigating, disrupting and dismantling human-trafficking networks that are profiting from conflict and human suffering.

We need high-profile convictions of the organizers of trafficking in order that that can serve as a deterrent to others. That can be achieved through the increased use of joint investigation teams, multilateral prosecutions and

data- and intelligence-sharing. We need to get smarter at debriefing victims and sensitively sharing that information with law-enforcement and victim-support agencies so as to inform efforts aimed at disruption and protection. All of the Nigerian survivors whom I met wanted to tell me about the identities, tactics and routes of the traffickers. Unfortunately, that information is not being routinely collected, analysed or acted on. Much more must be done to protect the vulnerable.

I strongly welcome resolution 2331 (2016), which calls for the systematic integration of proactive responses against slavery and trafficking into humanitarian responses to conflicts and related emergencies. This is urgent. On visits to reception centres I witnessed how the current absence of integrated protection is resulting in potential victims not being identified. Traffickers view refugee camps as a rich source of new victims. I have seen the positive impact that the deployment of dedicated experts can have, including cultural mediators. But, unfortunately, at present that is the exception rather than the norm. I would also encourage suitable training for all United Nations peacekeepers, as they will often be operating across routes known to be used by traffickers, especially in places such as Mali and the Sudan.

We need a more strategic and holistic response. Tackling the traffickers and protecting the vulnerable will only be achieved by utilizing all of the levers at the international community's disposal. That means deploying the United Nations leverage through development and humanitarian efforts, criminal-justice capacity-building, political work and peacekeeping operations.

The integration of the fight against modern slavery into the Sustainable Development Goals — and Goal 8.7 in particular — reflects the commitment of Member States to holistically tackle this crime. I very much welcome the Secretary-General's leadership on this issue, and I know he will be reporting at the end of the year on the implementation of resolution 2331 (2016).

Until there is a more strategic international response, there can be no doubt that this modern slavery crisis, fuelled by global conflict, will only get worse with each passing day. Working across borders, traffickers are making huge profits at the expense of human suffering. The international community must act now.

The President: I thank Mr. Hyland for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council. I remind them that they each have five minutes to make their statement.

I give the floor the Minister of Families, Children and Women's Rights of France.

Ms. Rossignol (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Kevin Hyland, Mr. Yury Fedotov and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their briefings.

France associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The actions committed by Da'esh in the Middle East and by Boko Haram in Africa are a dramatic illustration of the links that exist today between threats to international peace and security and human trafficking. At the global level, trafficking in persons and trafficking in drugs and counterfeit currency are among the most profitable. Their annual profits are estimated at $32 billion. It is one of the most extensive forms of trafficking. Sexual exploitation, forced labour, servitude, kidnapping for forced prostitution, rape — the list of atrocities committed in armed conflict is, unfortunately, long. Deriving profits from human beings and considering them as merchandise, the traffickers, as well as consumers and users and the clients of sexual exploitation, clearly and brutally violate their victims' human rights and further stoke the causes of conflict.

The international community has invested heavily in this problem since the beginning of this century, but further efforts are needed in order to address the scourge of human trafficking. I therefore welcome the initiative of the United Kingdom during its presidency of the Security Council and thank that country for giving us this opportunity to have an exchange on this very important subject.

For France, the issue of trafficking in human beings and slavery, especially that of women and children, is of major importance. The statistics are, unfortunately, well known, but we must constantly point them out: 80 per cent of the victims of trafficking are women and children. The challenges are also well known: the identification of victims is still in its infancy, and organized mechanisms for fighting this scourge vary greatly between countries. Despite progress since the entry into force of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially

Women and Children, still too few prosecutions have been initiated in cases involving the crime of human trafficking. The victims themselves do not always assert their rights and very often are insufficiently protected. In that context, international cooperation must be stepped up so as to increase the geographic coverage of the legislation providing effective protection against networks and to improve international cooperation aimed at dismantling those networks. Prevention, protection and the fight against impunity are the three priorities of French diplomacy in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

Since human trafficking is now an integral part of the strategy of certain terrorist groups and it fuels transnational organized crime, the Security Council has a special responsibility in combating this scourge. The adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), last December, at the initiative of Spain, was a major step forward towards better addressing the link between trafficking in human beings, sexual violence and terrorism. France very much looks forward to the report to be prepared by the Secretary-General by the end of the year.

We have in place a robust international legal framework and appropriate tools, in particular the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which is doing sterling work in this field.

On International Women's Rights Day, the President of the French Republic also announced that France would propose an additional protocol to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. That protocol would address violence against women in order to complement the existing international framework. But we must ensure that the obligations arising from that legal framework are effectively implemented. Our words must now be translated into action.

Rest assured, Mr President, that France will continue to play its full part in those efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs of Ethiopia.

Mrs. Hambisa (Ethiopia): Allow me, first of all, to express my appreciation to the presidency of the United Kingdom for organizing this high-level debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and the other briefers for their presentations on the theme of our debate today.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

It is only appropriate that we are discussing this important issue at a time when the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women is taking place here at Headquarters. It is indeed women, children and refugees who are the most vulnerable victims of human trafficking in conflict situations. As the concept note (S/2017/198, annex) rightly points out, this scourge is imposed on women and children through early and forced marriage, exploitative domestic work, sexual violence and other similar practices.

Whether it is Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Qaida in the Maghreb or Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh in Syria and Iraq, various criminal networks and terrorist groups are, without any doubt, involved in this transnational organized crime. Many Africans, including women and children escaping from persecution and/or searching for a better life in Europe and the Middle East, are falling victims to those terrorists and criminals. Kidnapping for ransom has become a typical means of exploitation, and some of these terrorists and criminals are becoming more and more adept at using the latest information and communication technologies, including mobile money-transfer systems, in order to collect ransoms and coordinate their criminal activities.

The gruesome stories of the victims and their trauma, torture and death at the hands of these terrorists and criminals are a stark reminder to us of the need to address this challenge individually and collectively. Putting in place the right policy, legislative and institutional framework at the national level and enhancing awareness of human trafficking and victim protection and assistance is absolutely imperative. It is in this context that we in Ethiopia have been trying to take various measures to prevent and fight trafficking in persons, including by ratifying relevant legal frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Aside from what each of us can and must do at the national level, however, there is certainly a need to

enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination regarding the identification of, assistanceto and the protection, repatriation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking. That is why, for instance, instruments such as the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, agreed between the African Union and the European Union, are important. We also take note of the cooperation at the subregional level, such as through the Khartoum and Rabat, processes to address trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of migrants.

In this regard, what we would like to highlight is the need to provide increased humanitarian and development support to refugee-hosting countries, transit countries and countries of origin in the light of the enormous challenges they face. Recent reports indicate that refugees, including unaccompanied minors, continue to engage in a dangerous secondary movement in search of a better life in Europe and elsewhere. That increases the risk of these refugees falling into the hands of terrorists, armed groups and trafficking networks. That is why the support of the international community in strengthening the protection and assistance capacities of large refugee-hosting countries, particularly in the area of the livelihoods and self-reliance of encamped and urban refugees, is critical. The expanded use of resettlement as a tool for international protection of the most vulnerable refugees should also be encouraged.

Finally, the lack of durable solutions to internally displaced persons and refugees, particularly women and children, no doubt increases their vulnerability to trafficking in persons. Therefore, what would eventually make a big difference in the fight against trafficking in persons is addressing the root causes of conflict. It is in this context that the role of the Council becomes much more relevant and significant.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality of Sweden.

Ms. Regnér (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries.

Combating brutal human rights violations by trafficking in persons must be a priority for us all. It is our common responsibility. Sweden remains strongly committed to eradicating all forms of trafficking in persons. We would therefore like to congratulate the United Kingdom on organizing this ministerial open debate.

Today's debate is important for many reasons. First, we need to ensure that this issue remains on the global agenda. Today's discussion builds on the momentum created under the Spanish presidency of the Council. Secondly, we need to move forward with actions in line with resolution 2331 (2016). Finally, trafficking in persons is a transnational threat that requires a transnational response. The United Nations provides a unique forum for achieving this goal.

Human trafficking and various forms of slavery are flourishing. This is due to ongoing conflicts and massive displacement of civilian populations, such as the situation in the Lake Chad basin region, which the Council visited two weeks ago. It flourishes because there are those ready to cruelly exploit others in desperate situations. The most effective way to end human trafficking is to address its root causes. The root cause is demand. For example, should there be no persons — the majority of them men — ready to buy sexual services ,there would be no trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Another root cause, of course, is conflict and displacement. We need to prevent them, as we heard not least in the excellent briefing on Somalia. We have to prevent them before they occur, and we have to invest in equitable sustainable development for all. These are important measures to combat human trafficking. Existing international obligations relating to human trafficking and forced labour must also be fully implemented.

The Council has an important role to play in prevention, including through the sustaining peace agenda. In addition, peace operations mandated by the Council must see the role that organized criminal groups, as well as terrorist groups, play in perpetuating the unstable situations and conflicts that lead to human trafficking, and in human trafficking itself. Working on the ground to create accountable and effective security sector institutions can enhance the capacity of Member States to address these groups.

As the Secretary-General has previously reported, there is a clear nexus between conflict- and post-conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, such as sexual slavery, forced labour and organ removal. The list is long. I will, however, focus on

sexual exploitation predominantly targeting women, and girls and boys.

The effects of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation are different from the harm caused by trafficking for other forms of exploitation. Recognizing that human trafficking has a clear gender dimension is therefore essential. All actions against trafficking should have a gender approach.

Sweden wants to stress the importance of not creating legal markets for human traffickers. There is an ongoing discussion within the United Nations and elsewhere about whether prostitution should be viewed as a profession. The term "sex worker" is often used in these discussions. Swedish policy on this issue is clear. Prostitution can never be regarded as a job; prostitution is exploitation. Sweden urges more countries to consider legislation that targets the person who buys sex and offers support to the person being exploited, thereby shifting the criminal focus and guilt from the person being exploited to the exploiter. Knowledge about one's own rights, including about sexual and reproductive health and rights, is crucial.

Another essential element is accountability in conflict and post-conflict environments. Sweden strongly supports the implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

As Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, we would also like to stress the particularly vulnerable situation of children in this regard, and also highlight the forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts as one of the worst forms of child labour. Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals asks us to eliminate this and we need to keep a strong focus on achieving this goal. We should also focus on Goal 5, on gender equality, and on the other relevant Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sweden is also proud to be a pathfinder country in the United Nations Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. It is a critical initiative, and Sweden would like to urge more countries to join it.

Finally, we must enable women and girls to make decisions about their own bodies, lives and futures in all contexts. We must engage more women both in peacebuilding activities and in action against trafficking. By implementing the agenda on women and peace and security, we can ensure that women's voices, experiences and solutions are brought to the table. Gender equality is about human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations and Member of President Trump's Cabinet.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for raising this important issue, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Hyland, Mr. Fedotov and Ms. Elman for their briefings and forceful calls to end all forms of modern slavery. The United States appreciates all of the work they have done to help move us towards that goal.

Rama was looking for a better life. A young woman in war-torn Syria, Rama was working in a café when a man offered her a restaurant job in Lebanon with a much higher salary. She jumped at the opportunity, but instead of taking her to the well-paying job he had promised, the man took Rama to a run-down brothel in a slum. Over the next nine months, she was beaten and forced into prostitution, one of as many as 75 women caught up in one of Lebanon's largest sex-trafficking rings. As Rama told a reporter,

> "We slept where we worked ... The windows were painted black. We couldn't see the light or breathe the air outside."

Describing her captor, the ringleader of the trafficking operation, she said,

> "It's not that he made us feel like slaves. We were actual slaves ... He beat me until I surrendered".

Rama eventually escaped that horror, but she is physically and emotionally shattered.

And Rama is not alone. Sadly, her experience is far more common than most of us realize. An estimated 21 million people in more than 106 countries, including countless children, have been reported trapped in modern slavery. That is more than the population of Romania. Those are people living in some of the most horrifying conditions imaginable. We see children forced to make bricks in Peru, or disentangle fishing nets in Ghana, or who are sold into prostitution in South-East Asia. We see men held captive on fishing boats off the coast of Thailand, and women trapped as domestic workers in the Persian Gulf. No country is immune to this crisis, and that includes the United States, where, despite our efforts to combat human trafficking, too many people are still falling victim to criminals who

force them into prostitution or other types of work, with no pay and no way out.

This is not just an issue of human dignity, it can also be one of peace and security. The groups responsible for human trafficking are all too often the same ones that send weapons and narcotics across our borders, or they are terrorist organizations that finance their attacks by smuggling desperate people. According to the non-governmental organization Human Rights First, traffickers earn an estimated $150 billion every year. That is big money, and it is money that frequently ends up supporting illegal activities that we all want to stop. And the problem is only getting harder to solve. Today, criminal gangs take advantage of technology to prey on people, putting fake job ads online and reaching out on social media to lure people into trafficking rings. When criminals want to sell the people they have enslaved, they can again turn to the Internet to find buyers more easily and with less risk of detection. Law enforcement often lacks the resources and training to enable it to penetrate such online networks and find the people who need help.

We must do better. Standing up to modern slavery and forced labour is a core element of foreign policy. It demonstrates our unwavering commitment to human rights and to the fact that all people, regardless of where they come from, have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That is why, each year, the United States Department of State produces a dedicated report on trafficking in persons, along with an annual human rights report, the latest of which has just been released. Both reports reflect our ongoing commitment to advancing human dignity. I would urge everyone here to read them and act on their recommendations for helping to promote accountability for violations and abuses. A few weeks ago, President Trump made it clear that his Administration will focus on ending the horrific practice of human trafficking. Our Government already has many people working on the problem, but we will be devoting even more resources to the fight.

There are many proposals out there on how we can help. Our briefers have already discussed several important initiatives, including some within the United Nations system, but I want to focus on just one new effort. In the coming weeks, the Department of State will launch an open and competitive process to fund transformational projects aimed at reducing the prevalence of modern slavery under a new initiative, the Program to End Modern Slavery, which was recently signed into law, thanks in large part to the tireless efforts of United States Senator Bob Corker. The initiative will seek to raise $1.5 billion to help countries break trafficking rings and support survivors. The funding will come partly from the United States Government, but unlike most assistance programmes, it will seek to raise most of its money from partners in foreign Governments and the private sector. That is important, because ending modern slavery must be a collective effort. The new initiative will also spend its money on programmes that show results. Groups that receive funding must set measurable goals and target a 50 per cent reduction in modern slavery for the population they will be working with. The United States will lead in rallying donors to that new effort and identifying innovative programmes that do the most good.

We cannot forget that when we help people trapped in modern slavery, we help restore human potential. At the State Department, for example, we now have an advisory council on human trafficking, with 11 members who help advise the federal Government on improving anti-trafficking policies. Some of them manage businesses, while others work in law firms or have founded non-governmental organizations. But what all 11 of them have in common is that they themselves are survivors of human trafficking. They now dedicate their time and energy to keeping others from suffering. Their stories are a testament to what every man, woman and child can achieve when they escape the exploitation of modern slavery. We should give all who are trapped the chance to live their lives and live up to their potential. The United States is determined to join with other Member States in order to make those efforts successful.

The President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): We commend the United Kingdom for convening today's debate and keeping the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict on the Security Council's agenda. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution that the Spanish presidency of the Security Council for December 2016 has made to the discussion of the issue.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to personally align myself with everything that was said by my Swedish colleague,

Minister Regnér. I particularly deplore the hypocrisy and lip service that many Governments display with regard to the plight of the women and girls who are major victims of human trafficking. I urge that they abandon such behaviour and get down to business.

The issue of human trafficking has been on the radar of the United Nations for decades. However, in recent years, we have seen a significant evolution in the forms that trafficking in persons takes, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. Like the deadliest kinds of viruses, some forms of trafficking mutate to the extent that they become immune to the actions and mechanisms that are in place but that lag behind the crimes they are supposed to prevent.

Trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation is still the most widespread form of trafficking, and the majority of its victims are women and girls. That is why we need to think about a more gender-specific, targeted approach in all actions against trafficking.

Another aspect of the issue is that persons displaced by conflict, including refugees, can be especially vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation. In that regard, Ukraine fully supports the commitments in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to combatting human trafficking, including through targeted measures to identify, protect and assist victims, and to prevent human trafficking among those affected by displacement, taking into account the particular vulnerabilities of women and children.

Trafficking is a transnational threat that requires a transnational response, including from this Council. It is encouraging that the Council addressed this issue in its December 2015 presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/25) and adopted resolution 2331 (2016) last December. We must build on that momentum. Both the presidential statement and the resolution stressed the need to ensure that trafficked persons are treated as victims of crime and are not penalized for their compelled involvement in the unlawful activities of the perpetrators.

Widespread impunity is unacceptable because the repetition of such crimes creates a vicious circle of delinquency. Along with provision of psychological, social and medical support to victims, we see the fight against impunity as a key priority area.

Following on the statement of the Secretary-General, I insist that human trafficking should be seen as a threat to international security, at least equal to trafficking in drugs and arms. For traffickers, human beings are just a commodity that can be sold for profit. The channels they use today for human trafficking may be used tomorrow for arms smuggling or transporting terrorists, if greater profit is promised The international community should therefore unite its efforts to eliminate those channels, treating them as a real danger.

The fight against this horrendous phenomenon is at the top of the agenda of Ukrainian Government activities in the field of human rights. In 1998, the International Organization for Migration launched the Counter-Trafficking Programme in Ukraine, with a view to supporting Government and civil society efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and to ensure victims' access to assistance and justice.

Over the past decade, Ukraine has made a number of important steps towards the establishment of a viable nationwide counter-trafficking response, setting up a Government-owned national referral mechanism to identify, assist and protect victims of trafficking. Ukraine has acceded to the main international legal instruments aimed at combating human trafficking and now has a solid national legal framework to address that disgraceful and dangerous phenomenon.

Let me note, however, that all of the aforementioned documents currently cannot be properly implemented in non-Government-controlled areas of Ukraine. As Commissioner Hyland stated here today, conflict is the major driver of modern slavery around the globe. Three years of Russian aggression against Ukraine have led to an increased risk of human trafficking in the affected areas. We have already seen numerous cases of human trafficking and forced labour — and even slavery — in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions outside the control of the Government.

But those cases remain largely unaddressed due to the lack of both safe access and proper attention by monitoring missions, especially the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It is therefore important that those international presences in Ukraine include the relevant activities in their monitoring work in non-Government-controlled areas. We also call on those organizations to provide relevant training to field staff working there and to include all

cases of human rights violations in that area in their regular reporting.

The situation is particularly complicated by the 400-kilometre section of the State border with the Russian Federation that is out of Ukraine's control and is widely used for the inflow of weapons, ammunition and fighters into the zone of conflict. The victims and perpetrators of trafficking in persons are also moving across that uncontrolled section of the border. In that connection, we have to be aware that Russia does not have comprehensive mechanisms for effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators in accordance the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Today, of all member States of the Council of Europe, only Russia has neither signed nor ratified that Convention, which was opened for signature and ratification 12 years ago.

Trafficking is a blatant violation of human rights, an offense against the dignity and integrity of a person. The success of our common fight against that scourge requires the effort of all concerned. A long-term solution can only emerge from consistent political commitment and the joint action of the international community to eradicate human trafficking, to promote justice and accountability, and to protect victims.

The President: I now give the floor to the Vice-Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mrs. Abylkassymova (Kazakhstan): We thank the British presidency for highlighting the gravity of human trafficking in conflict situations. We acknowledge with appreciation the Secretary-General's stewardship and moral voice to halt that scourge. We appreciate the briefings of Executive Director Fedotov, Commissioner Hyland and social activist Elman. My delegation offers some remarks for the Security Council's consideration.

The synergy of expertise of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as the lead agency, and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system must be strengthened. We urge greater collaboration within the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) and the sound management of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We support strengthened coordination between ICAT and Member States, which will enhance the effectiveness of the response to the current challenges of human trafficking.

All countries need to ratify, universalize and reaffirm their commitment to the landmark United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols; and all other anti-trafficking legal instruments. Accountability should be an important benchmark for all Member States.

At the same time, criminal justice responses, while essential, are not sufficient alone prevent and address human trafficking in situations affected by conflict. Peace and development lay the foundations of a stable society and human well-being. It is also essential to increase funding for poverty eradication, education, employment, and the provision of services in countries affected by conflict.

Terrorist groups treat slavery and human trafficking not just as a means to generate free labour services and profit, but also as a recruiting tool and a means to degrade and displace civilians. Hence, we urge States to mobilize a stronger and more vigilant global response. We must therefore strengthen the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/291, on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review, so that we can break the close nexus between trafficking in persons and terrorism. We need to cut off the sources of income and financial flows of terrorist groups resulting from human trafficking.

The money-laundering channels of organized crime networks must also be blocked. Therefore, we see the need for improved data-sharing, especially between law enforcement and financial sectors, in order to identify, disrupt and dismantle networks involved in human trafficking in conflict. It should be mandatory to train all peacekeeping and other personnel in gender sensitivity so that they may respond effectively to trafficking in persons. Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, especially when perpetrated by peacekeepers, must be a priority.

We see a pressing need for strengthening cooperation among the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union, the League of Arab States, INTERPOL and other global and regional organizations. The Central Asian and Commonwealth of Independent States countries should step up their

Regional Programme for 2014-2018, as well as the OSCE Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, of which Kazakhstan is an active member. My country has also initiated the Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration, which serves as a platform for nine countries of the region to step up their response annually and to enhance cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

At the national level, we are accelerating the work of the Interagency Commission, in close interaction with non-governmental organizations and the relevant international organizations as part of the fifth cycle of its national plan.

Kazakhstan, as a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking and a sponsor of resolution 2331 (2016), reaffirms its strong commitment to reaching visible results in combating trafficking in human beings.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As previous speakers have stated, in December 2016 the Council considered the issue of human trafficking in conflict situations (see S/PV.7847) and adopted resolution 2331 (2016), which strongly condemns all forms of human trafficking in areas of armed conflict.

In October, the General Assembly will hold a high-level meeting to assist action taken and ongoing challenges in the framework of the combat against human trafficking in general. This is a reflection of the importance that we the States Members of the United Nations attach to eradicating this appaling scourge, which, lest we forget, undermines the rule of law and development, and, above all, is a call on the universal conscience.

I should like to thank the British presidency for the timely choice of returning to this issue, this time placing emphasis on and forced labour, slavery and other similar practices in conflict situations. I thank also Secretary-General António Guterres for his important statement, as well as our briefers today, Mr. Fedotov, Mr. Hyland and Ms. Elman. Their briefings were extremely instructive and illuminating with respect to the gravity and scale of this scourge.

The armed conflicts currently under way throughout the world unfortunately represent an opportunity for traffickers, as the impunity resulting from the breakdown of law and order allows them to operate more easily and on a broader scale. Moreover, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in its 2016 report, clearly highlights the complex links between human trafficking and armed conflict. In addition, migrants are the victims of trafficking and smuggling in conflict zones, specifically because of those very conflicts. During armed conflict, the loss and lack of economic opportunity, discrimination and gender violence are compounded. Family support networks are weakened or destroyed, all of which contributes to exacerbating individual and collective vulnerability to trafficking.

The resurgence of the phenomenon of human trafficking in armed conflict situations is all the more troubling since it leads to the forced marriage and sexual or domestic enslavement of women and girls, and to men and boys being trafficked into forced labour, if not enslaved outright or turned into combatants.

Therefore, it is clear that human trafficking can be described as — to use the term of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children — an "umbrella concept" for practices that are all equally inhuman and barbaric in nature.

While certain forms of trafficking result from exacerbated vulnerability due to conflict, others are the direct result of the actions of armed groups that operate in conflict zones. My delegation would like in particular to reiterate its growing concern at the involvement of non-State and terrorist armed groups in human trafficking in situations of conflict, often with the goal of modifying the composition of a community or persecuting or humiliating a given ethnic or religious group. These practices, which, sadly, we have had difficulty eradicating, are used by extremist groups not only as terrorist tactics but also as a strategy of war, with a view to furthering their goals and ideology, consolidate their power or to increase their sources of financing.

It is therefore crucial that we conduct an intensive and determined struggle against all forms of human trafficking in situations of armed conflict, including against forced labour, slavery and other, similar practices. These practices, in addition to constituting grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and exacerbating instability, contribute to the fuelling of terrorist groups. We therefore cannot but reiterate the overriding need to implement resolution 2195 (2014), on the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as

the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In terms of the struggle under way in my country, allow me to highlight the fact that in addition to having ratified virtually all international and regional instruments relative to human trafficking, Senegal also has adopted legislative and regulatory instruments that address the issues of migration and human trafficking, particularly through a specific law on the trafficking of persons and similar practices and on the protection of victims, which was adopted in 2005 and complements the Senegalese penal code. That law criminalizes the trafficking of persons and similar practices by placing emphasis on the diverse forms of exploitation of vulnerable persons and their transnational organized character.

Furthermore, in order effectively to clamp down on violations in the field of human trafficking and in the trafficking of migrants, chapter 3 of that same law confers to the Senegalese authorities two kinds of competence, one universal, through article 10, and the other based on the passive personality principle, through article 11.

In addition to this legal framework, a set of structures exists for addressing problems linked to human trafficking, including a counselling and guidance centre for children in difficult situations, an inter-sectoral department for combating child labour and a national unit to combat trafficking in persons. The latter has two missions: one to provide early warning, monitoring, information and communication, and a scientific mission, which is to formulate proposals for the modification of legislation on human trafficking and harmonize them.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress the need for the international community to focus on prevention, protection, reintegration and accountability in the framework of combating all scourges that threaten humankind, including conflicts and human trafficking in situations of conflict. In this regard, we will have to ensure that we can effectively focus on deterring, detecting and ending human trafficking, in particular as carried out by violent extremist groups, as the Council highlighted in its presidential statement on human trafficking issued on 20 December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25).

Human trafficking in situations of armed conflict constitutes a threat to stability, the maintenance of peace and reconstruction in affected countries. We are in duty bound to collectively and in a concerted manner put an end to these repugnant practices.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the initiative of the United Kingdom to convene today's ministerial-level open debate. I should like also to thank Secretary-General Guterres and Executive Director Fedotov for their briefings. China also listened attentively to the briefings by Commissioner Hyland and Ms. Elman.

Today some parts of the world are ravaged by incessant armed conflict and the rampant abuses of armed groups, terrorist organizations and transnational organized criminal rings, which pose a grave threat to the safety, health and dignity of local populations. One of the dire consequences is the growing scourge of human trafficking in conflict situations. Victims are often subject to forced labour and slavery and vulnerable groups, including women and children bear the brunt. China strongly rejects all forms of human trafficking in situations of armed conflict and supports international efforts to tackle this scourge in a concerted manner.

First, we must step up efforts to combat human trafficking and slavery in conflict situations, as actors in this phenomenon — armed groups, terrorist organizations and transnational organized criminal networks — are highly mobile and can move across borders and between countries of origin, transit and destination. On the one hand, the international community should vigorously support the countries concerned in combating criminal activities and provide them with targeted capacity-building support in the areas of law enforcement, border control and financial regulation, in line with their own national conditions and upon their request. On the other hand, we need to enhance international cooperation with a focus on law enforcement collaboration and leverage the role of regional and subregional organizations and pool all resources available to investigate, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks. We need to encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration and other United Nations agencies and international organizations to provide conflict-affected countries with financial, human and technical support, in line with their respective mandates and expertise.

Secondly, we need to attach greater importance to combating terrorism. Terrorist organizations, such

as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, obtain funding by means such as the trafficking in persons, forced labor and enslavement and resort to brutal tactics. The international community should uphold uniform counter-terrorism standards; take coordinated and concerted action; exercise zero tolerance against terrorism and resolutely address crimes of trafficking, exploitation and enslavement of populations in conflict situations, in particular women and children; take an integrated approach that encompasses political and economic means and stop the financial flow of funds obtained from enslavement and human trafficking to terrorist organizations; and dismantle their criminal networks. We need to take robust and effective measures to combat the use by terrorist groups of the Internet to disseminate terrorist audio and visual products in order to incite individuals to commit acts of terrorism and for recruitment purposes. We must protect people in conflict areas from becoming easy prey to terrorist and extremist ideologies and falling victim to such crimes as human trafficking. In the meantime, we need to ensure that victims and survivors of such crimes receive the assistance they need to facilitate their reintegration.

Thirdly, we must reinforce efforts towards a political settlement of conflicts. Protracted regional conflicts provide a breeding ground for human trafficking and other criminal activities. The international community should work harder to find political solutions to hotspot issues with a renewed sense of urgency, assist countries in conflict in advancing their political process and their national reconciliation in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in settling their disputes and bridging their differences by peaceful means, including through dialogue and consultation. We need to give greater weight to the prevention of conflicts and help countries to improve their ability to achieve sustainable development, consolidate a basis for peace and root out the conditions and drivers for human trafficking and enslavement in conflict situations, so as to provide an enabling external environment for the protection of women and children in conflict situations.

China will continue to support the international community in exercising a zero-tolerance policy against human trafficking in armed conflict and enhancing the protection of the rights of women and children in armed conflict. China will work with its partners to safeguard peace, security, stability and development at the international and regional levels.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for having taken the initiative of holding this debate. First and foremost, we would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres; the Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. Fedotov; and Mr. Kevin Hyland, Independent Anti-slavery Commissioner, for their respective briefings.

According to the 2016 UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, 79 per cent of the victims of human trafficking are women and children, with a clear example being the Yazidi women and girls who were submitted to various kinds of slavery and torture by the so-called Islamic State. Due to that situation, a lot of them have had to leave their countries of origin to find more favourable living conditions. Similarly, against the backdrop of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which is now under way, we are deeply concerned to note that, according to the UNODC report I just mentioned, 20 per cent of the victims of forced labour and 72 per cent of those of sexual exploitation are women — a situation that clearly cannot be ignored.

On the one hand, the economic asymmetries between the North and South that are reflected in the way in which wealth is concentrated in some countries, together with the neoliberal economic and financial system, are some of the structural causes of poverty and lead to large migration flows. On the other hand, because of war and armed conflict, many people are forced to leave their countries of origin and become displaced persons or refugees. In many cases, those conflicts and wars are the result of regime-change policies, which mostly do not lead to peaceful and democratic transitions, but instead involve deep-seated structural changes and also result in violence because of a lack of political stability. The upshot of this is the forced displacement of tens of millions of people around the world since the end of 2015, increasing by 6 million as compared to the previous year.

It is undeniable that armed violence and terrorism are closely linked to human trafficking and associated crimes. International criminal groups and terrorist groups, which the Council and all States Members of the Organization are combating, such as the so-called Islamic State, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haraam and Al-Qaida, among others, are those that benefit from human trafficking and use those economic gains to finance

their terrorist activities. It is clear that terrorism and the threat of violence, the crisis of capitalism, repression and poverty have reduced the freedom and civil and political rights of millions of citizens around the world. In that connection, the responsibility of the countries of all Members of the United Nations is to first recognize a historic debt towards those people who are suffering because of actions often perpetrated through conflicts that were initiated, promoted and led by certain military and economic Powers.

That is why we believe that as some countries close their borders, build walls, criminalize immigration and deny access to refugees they are not only promoting human trafficking, but they are also promoting xenophobia, discrimination and racism. That is also serving to fuel the rhetoric of terrorist groups that we all want to fight, including intolerance to different religious beliefs and the terrible way in which this is becoming associated with terrorism. In that regard, there is no justification for violating the basic principles of human rights. The international community cannot turn its back on this reality.

It is also important to mention the economic benefits resulting from human trafficking. They form part of the global financial system through money laundering and tax havens, which tend to diminish or eliminate the regulations, especially in the area of investment of the service industry. These things are used by organized crime to legitimize their profits. In that regard, it would be important to look into access to these tax havens by terrorist or criminal groups.

In my own region of Latin America and the Caribbean, we are no strangers to the evils of human trafficking. My country, too, is a victim of such crimes, in particular sexual exploitation and forced labour. In that regard, it is important to call for the establishment of various mechanisms at the regional level to reinforce the fight at the regional as well as national levels. In Bolivia, since 2002, there has been a comprehensive law against trafficking in persons the aim of is to fight that scourge. Moreover, the State is also providing the necessary resources to ensure the effectiveness of that campaign.

On the other hand, through this forum, as President Evo Morales Ayma proposed, I would like to point out that Bolivia has proposed that we work together on the concept of universal citizenship, thereby making it possible for everyone wherever they are to be able to move freely, which would contribute to eliminate trafficking in persons. As a result of that proposal, the World Conference of the Peoples for a World without Walls towards universal citizenship will be held in Bolivia on 20 and 21 June, with representatives from all continents attending. We invite not only States but fundamentally social organizations to participate in that summit.

I reiterate clearly for the benefit of the Security Council that while human trafficking is a problem that we have only taken on recently, it is relevant to the principles governing this organ with regard to dealing with international peace and security. It is therefore essential that we combat that scourge, which affects human rights and life itself.

I will end my statement by recalling what Stephen O'Brien told us a few days ago in the Council (see S/PV.7897). At the beginning of the year, we were facing the greatest humanitarian crisis since the founding of the United Nations, but at the same time I believe that it is important to remember that the world's population is living in a time that is witnessing the greatest level of inequality in its history. Those two facts — the humanitarian crisis and that inequality — are not unrelated or inseparable.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan appreciates the United Kingdom's initiative in convening this open debate. I also thank the briefers for their valuable input.

As Da'esh uses sexual exploitation as a means for their terrorist activities, many terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations and armed groups use trafficking in persons as a method for fundraising and recruitment. That is totally unacceptable. Regrettably, the trafficking children and exploiting them as combatants in armed conflicts are also taking place in various parts of the world. Those examples show how violations of human rights and dignity also become threats to international peace and security. The Security Council must therefore proactively address that issue.

Resolution 2231 (2016), which was adopted in December 2016, calls upon Member States to fully implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Convention and the Protocol are universal legal frameworks to combat trafficking in persons, and their full implementation

and related technical assistance by the relevant United Nations agencies are key. Japan therefore attaches great importance to the assistance provided by the United Nations United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and is stepping up its support to that Office. In that regard, Japan has pledged approximately $23 million to the UNODC, which should be disbursed by the end of this month. That contribution is aimed at bolstering terrorism prevention and building capacity for law enforcement, mainly targeting countries in Africa.

The global number of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons has reached a new record since the Second World War. Among the many vulnerable groups in the world, displaced populations are increasingly targeted by human traffickers. Based on the concept of human security, which is a human-centred approach that places the interests of individuals as a priority, Japan attaches importance to identifying, protecting and providing assistance to victims. In that regard, Japan has been contributing to the International Organization for Migration's programmes against trafficking in persons in countries such as Somalia and Djibouti, among others. I am confident that such efforts will help combat the root causes of trafficking in persons and lead to the promotion of international peace and security. Furthermore, the cooperation of all actors who are engaged in peace and security, development, humanitarian affairs and human rights both within and outside the United Nations is crucial.

To conclude, I reaffirm Japan's commitment to combatting trafficking in persons. The issue should be addressed in various forums inside and outside the Security Council. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons, to take place in October, will be an important opportunity to assess achievements, gaps and challenges. We look forward to intensifying efforts towards and discussions about that meeting and beyond.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's debate.

In the past, even as a non-Council member, Italy has stressed the need for the Security Council to be engaged in human trafficking and the related serious violations of human rights, and to that end, two years ago, promoted resolution 2240 (2015), on countering the business model of traffickers off the coast of Libya in the Mediterranean. As a Council member, we support treating the issue as a priority.

Italy aligns it itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU). In my national capacity, I would like to add the following remarks.

First, it is essential, we believe, to follow up on resolution 2331 (2016), which was introduced by Spain. Its adoption represented a big step forward, in particular by highlighting the links between transnational organized crime, terrorism and trafficking networks. Transnational organized crime and terrorist groups make use of human trafficking as a weapon to control territories and as a major source of funding. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General in following up on resolution 2331 (2016) by systematizing the action of subsidiary organs involved in counter-terrorism and sanctions, specialized agencies and the Special Rapporteur entrusted with preparing a detailed study on the difficulties of establishing guilt and/or responsibilities with regard to crimes of sexual violence and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children. Italy looks forward to the Secretary-General's report on resolution 2331 (2016), to be submitted at the end of the year, which we believe will further enhance the United Nations and the Council's capacity to address that growing threat.

Secondly, human trafficking requires a comprehensive approach at the national and international levels. At the international level, we need a concerted response grounded on the implementation of international rules and encompassing the aspects of prevention, law enforcement and accountability. In that respect, Italy looks forward to the high-level debate on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, also known as the Palermo Convention, to be held in the General Assembly in June. At the same time, national jurisdictions bear the primary responsibility to criminalize such offenses and ensure the accountability of the criminals. We stress the importance that all States ratify, fully transpose and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at the national level as they provide the main internationally agreed legal framework to prevent and combat human trafficking. In that regard, we praise the UNODC-EU initiative, the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling

of Migrants, to assist the development of national comprehensive strategies to counter trafficking.

Thirdly, the available statistics urgently indicate that we must take more victim-centred, gender-specific and children-sensitive actions. Women account for more than half of all victims of trafficking at the global level. Children are especially exposed to exploitation as they are increasingly compelled to leave their homes alone. In 2016 alone, approximately 26,000 unaccompanied or separated minors reached Italy by sea, thereby more than doubling the numbers recorded in 2015. Empowering women and enhancing their role in peacebuilding is crucial. We are launching the creation of a network of women mediators in the Mediterranean aimed at fostering stability, security and respect for human rights in the Mediterranean, which we think will contribute to combating human trafficking and all forms of slavery and related abuses. As a first step, we are organizing with the United Kingdom presidency an Arria formula meeting on the subject on 27 March.

Fourthly, we think that legal and safe ways to ensure the movement of people fleeing from conflicts serve an important instrument in the fight against trafficking. The Italian Government is carrying out a project called "humanitarian corridors", which allows safe and legal entry into Italy to people fleeing from conflict, especially in Syria. It is an act of solidarity and a model that other States, such as France, are following. It is also a means to combat trafficking and the exploitation of the trafficked. In the same spirit, we also welcome the call on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to end statelessness, including through the enhancement and digitalization of a civil registry in the countries of origin, because the lack of documents is one of the main factors that can induce modern slavery.

Large movements of people can facilitate human trafficking and modern enslavement. Being a migrant is itself a vulnerability that can favour the exploitation of people on the move. Let me, in conclusion, reiterate the pillars of Italy's approach: sharing responsibilities and raising awareness at the regional and global levels; saving lives at sea; addressing the socioeconomic and political root causes of conflict; disrupting the business model of traffickers and smugglers; and upholding the rights of migrants and refugees and international humanitarian law.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their participation in today's meeting. The problem of human trafficking in conflict situations and terrorism was discussed by the Council in December last year (see S/PV.7847). The victims of human trafficking, including women and children, annually run into the hundreds of thousands. The Security Council has repeatedly condemned the depredations of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, whose victims comprise the least protected sections of the population.

Human trafficking today remains a serious challenge in various parts of the world. It is particularly dangerous when those activities cross over into businesses controlled by organized crime. The proceeds of human trafficking are used as sources of financing for terrorism, compounding the threat to international peace and security. Crimes in that sphere are often accompanied by equally deleterious phenomena such as abduction, sexual violence and the proliferation of narcotics.

The exploitation of the victims of human trafficking take various forms, including forced labour and slavery. Today's meeting takes place on the eve of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It offers a good opportunity to once again recall the tragic consequences of that centuries-old disgraceful practice, which, even today, stands as one of the root causes of a number of contemporary conflicts.

As to the modern forms of human trafficking, we must address the root causes and take consistent measures against criminal groups. In that context, a not inconsiderable role is played by the demand for black market labour and the legalization of the sex industry in consumer countries. Effective results can be achieved only by adopting a comprehensive approach, including prevention and assistance to victims and the prosecution of criminals with the appropriate level of international cooperation, including in the sphere of legal assistance. Coordinating action within that sphere, both within and among States, should involve law-enforcement bodies, social services and non-governmental organizations that provide assistance to victims.

One of the natural partners of States should be the institution of the family. As an important instrument for sustainable development and social integration, the

family reduces vulnerabilities to various challenges and threats, including those linked to the root causes of human trafficking. By strengthening the institution of the family States can minimize those risks.

Combating human trafficking is a sphere where we very much need to draw on the potential for partnering with the business community. Right now, together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, we are making preparations to host in Moscow in 2017 a conference devoted to that very theme.

Responsibility for combating human trafficking and modern forms of slavery lies, above all, with the States themselves. They must independently define national policies and methods for eradicating the phenomenon and investigate crimes and pursue and bring to justice the perpetrators. We support initiatives aimed at consolidating efforts on the part of States, bodies of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations geared towards combating human trafficking. We participate in the financing of those activities.

We note the work of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in providing specialized assistance to States upon their request. We believe that such assistance must strike a balance between the needs of the countries of origin and the countries of destination alike. Today, the international community has created an entire series of mechanisms aimed at fundamentally improving cooperation among all stakeholders in combating human trafficking. One of the most important initiatives was the creation of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, in which our delegation takes an active part. We welcome the holding in October of a high-level meeting of the General Assembly to assess progress in implementing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is a key yardstick for States in that domain.

As for the role of the Security Council, it must be limited only to consideration of the issue of human trafficking in conjunction with the situations on its agenda, in particular in the context of fighting terrorism, including its financing. We need to recall that in and of itself, outside of those circumstances, phenomena such as human trafficking, forced labour or slavery — as dangerous and repugnant as they are — are not directly related to the work of the Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Council is already dealing with a number of similar cross-cutting issues, such as children and armed conflict, sexual violence in armed conflict, and women and peace and security. Overall, we need to ensure that the work of the existing structures is as effective and complementary as possible, while respecting their purviews and the distribution of tasks among them.

In conclusion, and in response to the Ukrainian statement and its unfounded accusations against Russia, the theme of this meeting is highly relevant to that country. It would seem, by the looks of things, that they are treating people like slaves who have no rights and cannot, for instance, claim to have a national identity or use their native language. That is the attitude taken by Kyiv towards the people living in eatern Ukraine. It has tried to respond by clamping down with violence, the way slave rebellions were handled in ancient times. When that failed and despite thousands being wounded and killed as a result of the use of force by the Kyiv authorities, they then tried to stifle the residents of Donbas, using any available means, such as imposing an economic and transport blockade and stopping social-services payments, among others.

Today, the Ukrainian authorities have adopted a similar decision to fully cease transport communications with Donbas. It is no secret that after achieving independence, Ukraine has traditionally been one of the countries with the worst records in terms of human trafficking and forced labour. Now in times of conflict, such criminal activity has acquired a particularly repugnant form, manifesting itself in the exploitation of the vulnerability and lack of protection of internally displaced persons.

It is our hope that the Ukrainian authorities will address those problems by other means than attempting to place the blame on Russia, as they usually do.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on convening today's important debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their invaluable contributions.

Egypt attaches great importance to the issue of human trafficking. Egypt has always been and will always be a pioneer in fighting all forms of slavery and similar practices, such as indentured servitude,

recruitment by armed groups and forced labour. Egypt believes that human trafficking is a criminal practice that runs counter to recognized human values.

Egypt stresses that trafficking in humans follows extremely diverse patterns which have becom increasingly complex due to a growing number of elements, including developments in information and communications technology and the tactics used by criminal groups to form organized networks that traffick in humans. In addition, the lack of accurate and reliable data and statistics allow for these crimes to be committed in the dark, giving rise to billions of dollars of profit.

Under Egyptian law, human trafficking is a hybrid crime involving transnational organized crime networks that commit other criminal acts such as terrorism, drug trafficking, money-laundering, migrant- and refugee-smuggling and the arms trade, all of which are a constant threat to international peace and security. In this regard, Egypt has ratified all regional and international conventions and instruments related to the subject. The national laws of Egypt include severe punishments for crimes related to the different forms of this practice. The national strategy to combat and prevent human trafficking was launched in 2016 and is the framework for transparent cooperation among Government bodies and civil society in accordance with the imperatives of national security.

Last December's adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2331 (2016), on human trafficking in armed conflict, was an important landmark in the history of the Council (see S/PV.7847). In this respect, we would like to stress the following points. First, the Council should address all forms of human trafficking equally since, under the Palermo Protocol, they have equal legal impacts. Secondly, the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Palermo Protocol should serve as the basis of States' obligations in relation to fighting human trafficking. The main pillar of the Convention, related to exploitation, should be implemented. Thirdly, the international community should redouble its efforts to stop funding all terrorist groups, including by stopping human trafficking, and all international tools should be used in this respect. Fourthly, human trafficking, particular the trafficking in women and girls, should not be linked to religion, nationality or civilization. Religious and traditional leaders should play an important role in denouncing the link between them that is being promoted by extremists. Fifthly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime plays a major role in the General Assembly — and should play an even greater role — on the issue of human trafficking. All financial resources should be made available to the Office in order to enable it to discharge its task.

Egypt stresses its full support for the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is the governing framework for international cooperation in this regard, not only for States but also for civil society and the private sector. Egypt is looking forward to a robust outcome document from the second review of the Plan of Action next October. The Egyptian delegation will actively engage in this review process.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first of all to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening this debate. I am also grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov, Mr. Kevin Hyland and Ms. Ilwad Elman, for their comprehensive briefings.

I would like to highlight four points in my statement: first, the time frame and the geographic area where human trafficking, forced labour, slavery and other similar practices take place; secondly, the root causes of these problems; thirdly, what can be done to combat them; and fourthly, the importance of victim support.

First, with regard to the time frame and the geographic area, human trafficking, forced labour and so-called modern slavery are social and political aberrations that we see in a very great number of countries, and in many cases in countries where supposedly there is social peace. Unfortunately, the absence of conflict is no guarantee of the absence of these scourges. However, when these practices are carried out in situations of conflict or weakness, the victims find themselves in a situation of even greater vulnerability in the face of the actions of terrorists and criminal networks. It is necessary to bear in mind that the geographic areas in which these practices are generally carried out transcends those where the conflict is unfolding, including neighbouring countries and even distant countries. In addition, the time frame goes well beyond the duration of conflicts, and the consequences of these practices are suffered by the victims for the rest of their lives.

It is fundamental that the international community expressed its full-throated condemnation of human

trafficking when we unanimously adopted resolution 2331 (2016) last December, on the occasion of the open debate organized by the delegation of Spain (see S/PV.7847). Human trafficking is an aberrant practice in all its forms and manifestations and whatever its purpose. Trafficking in persons represents a serious abuse of human rights that denigrates its victims, stripping them of their human condition to the detriment of the interests of the criminal and terrorist networks operating throughout the world. Uruguay welcomes the growing link between the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Secretary-General and the Security Council, and we would highlight coordination with the Peacebuilding Commission in order to prevent areas that are in a post-conflict situation from becoming a fertile ground for the actions of criminal organizations.

Secondly, we need to address the structural causes that lead to conflicts. The absence of State authority, the lack of guarantees, poverty, inequality in all its aspects, and the lack of access to education or political participation, generate vacuums that are filled by terrorist organizations and human trafficking. Not only do these organizations take advantage of the absence or instability of a State that cannot fulfil its primary responsibility for protecting its inhabitants, but they also play on the desperation of the population affected.

Thirdly, in dealing with trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict, we must remember that many of these scenarios are taking place in areas where peacekeeping operations are deployed. We therefore note the importance and appropriateness of these operations having adequate mandates to identify, protect and assist the victims of human trafficking, to monitor and report on such situations, and to support authorities in developing their capacities. It is also important for States to comply with the provisions of the relevant international instruments.

The adoption of the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, was a particularly important step in understanding the issue and in making States aware of their responsibilities to address the problem in a comprehensive manner, both in terms of the prevention and protection of victims and in investigating and punishing traffickers. We call on all those countries that have not done so to accede to the Protocol and ratify the conventions of the International Labour Organization on forced labour and the abolition of forced labour in order to prevent the proliferation of such practices.

States must also adopt the national measures necessary to monitor and hold the perpetrators accountable. We must keep in mind that, according to estimates of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), some 60 per cent of trafficking victims identified throughout the world are foreign to the country where they have been identified. Such data confirm that no country is exempt from the responsibility to identify and eventually punish those responsible.

Fourthly and finally, in relation to the situation of victims, Uruguay wishes to highlight the need for comprehensive assistance for victims of trafficking. The focus should be on their recovery and reintegation into society. Victims should receive legal and psychosocial assistance and protection that address their specific needs. The rights of victims of trafficking should be at the centre of the entire enderavour to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. The traffic in people affects all sectors of the population, but there are certain social groups that suffer disproportionately. In this context, and as reported by Unodc, almost one-third of victims are children and more than 70 per cent are girls and women.

In conclusion, I wish to highlight the importance of cooperation among States in combatting trafficking in persons and in judging and condemning those responsible.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I should like to begin by thanking all four of our excellent briefers and by paying particular tribute to our civil society briefer, Ilwad Elman, for bringing home to us the devastating impact of trafficking and slavery in conflict. She gave voice to the 46 million men, women and children caught up in that tragedy across the world. I am glad that so many ministers are here today to hear that testimony, and I am grateful to them and to all Council members for their statements.

The fullest response of each and every Member of the United Nations is needed, and I look forward to hearing the views of countries outside the Security Council shortly because, as we have heard so clearly, modern slavery is a global problem that extends far beyond the 15 countries represented at this table.

It exists in nearly all societies, including my own. It does not respect borders or jurisdictions. It does not recognize the dignity or worth of the human person. It just sees opportunities to exploit and lives to destroy.

If we could hear the millions who are being coerced and exploited today, their unwavering message to us would be that we have simply not done enough and that we have shut our eyes and dulled our senses to a crime we hoped had been consigned to history. That is why the United Kingdom called this open debate. It is why my Prime Minister, Theresa May, first raised this issue before the General Assembly last year (see A/71/PV.8) and plans to do so again later this year. It is also why we are taking such strong action in our own country and across the world so that, together, we can eradicate it.

We know the root causes. Poverty, conflict and instability lie at the heart of the suffering of so many victims. When a State's authorities is eroded and its responsibility to its people is unfulfilled, organized criminal networks thrive, partnering with armed groupds and terrorists to prey on the vulnerable — to prey on those who have already suffered far too much. We know what follows: sexual exploitation and sexual slavery, forced labour and child labour, human rights in tatters, conflict exploited and conflict sustained.

This should be a familiar tale to the Council. We heard it ourselves in north-eastern Nigeria only last week. We saw it in the hands in the air when we asked the women there whether they had lost a child to Boko Haram. We saw it in their tears as they spoke of abducted daughters, of mass rapes, of grandchildren being born only to be enslaved. In response, we need a more forceful and unified United Nations approach to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report in November on exactly that, and we encourage him to focus on making existing structures, including the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, work effectively.

We also need to combine our efforts across the mandates entrusted to us. We in the Council have a responsibility — no, a duty — to maintain international peace and security, to end the instability in which modern slavery thrives. As United Nations Members, we have frameworks for action, including the commitment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ending trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour, and the General Assembly's Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

But we also need to take responsibility as individual Member States. That means doing more to disrupt and disband serious organized criminal networks engaged in people trafficking. It means all of us ratifying the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, and the Protocol to the International Labour Organization Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour. And it means taking real steps to strengthen our own national systems to identify, investigate and prosecute those committing these abhorrent crimes.

If we take these steps, at home and here in the United Nations, we will have begun to turn the page. But if we are to truly consign this terrible tragedy to the history books, we will need sustained commitment that endures long after this meeting is over. Modern slavery must become a recurring theme for the Council and other parts of the United Nations to return to, including at this year's session of the General Assembly, so that we can accelerate our efforts to end this abhorrent practice once and for all.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with statements longer than that are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version, within the time limit, when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Tuñez (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank the United Kingdom for organizing this debate. We emphasize the fact that this debate is being held at the same time as the ongoing session of the Women's Legal and Social Commission.

Argentina considers that the fight against trafficking in persons and forced labor must be comprehensive, since it includes a multiplicity of actors at various levels, and that it must be waged within the framework of the defence and promotion of human rights. We therefore

believe it appropriate for such topics to be addressed as a matter of priority by the General Assembly.

In that context, Argentina maintains a strong commitment to the fight against human trafficking as the most extreme form of violence. We are committed at the multilateral level and promote national policies to eliminate this scourge. At the national level, in 2013 we established the Executive Committee for Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and for the Protection and Assistance of Victims. Also, in July 2016 we convened for the first time the Federal Council for Combating Trafficking, which I have the honor of coordinating, with the aim of designing a federal strategy to eradicate human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women in prostitution.

These concrete actions demonstrate the political will of the State to address the various dimensions of the scourge of human trafficking. Based on the new international consensus reached in September 2015 with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals and corresponding targets, all States pledged under Goal 8.7 to

> "[t]ake immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour".

With regard to forced labour, Argentina supports the initiative of Alliance 8.7, promoted by the United Kingdom, and is among those countries that have been part of it since its inception. Argentina is also a member of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development, created in 2014. Child labour is strongly linked to forced labour, according to data from the International Labour Organization. Of the 21 million annual victims of forced labour, 5.5 million are children, in flagrant violation of article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In line with Argentina's historic commitment to combating child labour, next November, along with the International Labour Organization, Argentina will host the fourth Global Conference on Child Labour, whose theme will be eliminating child labour and forced labour and the generation of quality jobs for youth.

Finally, with regard to the relationship between trafficking in persons and forced labour and terrorism, Argentina had the honor of co-facilitating, along with Iceland, General Assembly resolution 70/291, entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review", which expresses concern that in some regions terrorists may benefit from transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons. Argentina reiterates its renewed commitment to combating trafficking in persons, forced labour and all forms of slavery in every situation, as well as the need for this issue to continue to be addressed at the General Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Women, Minister for Employment and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Services.

Ms. Cash (Australia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia. We thank the United Kingdom for convening this debate.

Every country in the world is affected by the scourge of modern slavery, either through local exploitation or as a point of origin, transit or destination for trafficking victims. Eradicating slavery and sexual violence, in particular in conflict situations, is an essential precondition for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. We have a shared responsibility to disrupt this evil trade and address its root causes. No single State or organization can do that alone. Our individual efforts are important; however, regional and global cooperation will be the key to success.

We know that conflict and instability and the resulting economic desperation amplify the risk of forced labour for vulnerable people. In Australia, I recently established the Migrant Worker Task Force, which will develop strategies and make improvements to stamp out the exploitation of vulnerable workers. We have also launched an inquiry into whether Australia should follow the United Kingdom's lead and adopt legislation to combat modern slavery. And Australia's bid for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2018-2020 reflects our strong commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights internationally.

Canada has taken a strong stance on the prevention of all forms of exploitation and violence against women and girls in situations of conflict. In particular, Canada will welcome approximately 1,200 vulnerable Yazidi women and children who have been subjected to the most heinous forms of sexual exploitation.

New Zealand has secured a landmark trafficking conviction, which resulted in a substantial sentence and an order to pay reparations. New Zealand is also currently planning to expand and update its national plan of action to combat trafficking, in order to incorporate slavery and forced labour.

The International Labour Organization estimates that 21 million people worldwide are subject to forced labour. More than 56 per cent of them are in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia and New Zealand are working with countries in the region to stamp out those barbaric and criminal practices. We work in partnership with civil society and regional forums to eliminate the drivers of vulnerability, build the capacity of local authorities and assist victims of those terrible crimes. That includes addressing transnational crime and corruption and strengthening governance frameworks and criminal justice systems.

A key element in that effort is the Bali Process. The Bali Declaration recognizes the critical need to engage with the private sector, including by promoting and implementing humane, non-abusive labour practices throughout supply chains. Later this year, the Bali Process Business Forum will bring together Ministers and private-sector leaders from the 45 member countries of the Bali process to discuss policy approaches to tackling human trafficking and slavery and to share experiences on best practices.

We need a global anti-trafficking strategy and better coordination of data and funding. We must encourage and support United Nations efforts to strengthen coordination and develop a more strategic and coherent international response. Alliance 8.7 provides an important platform to advance our international cooperation and programmes. It will assist all States Members of the United Nations to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and all forms of child labour. Australia and Canada are proud to be part of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development, and I encourage all Members to join.

We should also ensure that the 2017 review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons makes a practical contribution.

Every country in the world is affected by the blight of modern slavery. We must be focused, committed and coordinated in stamping it out.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Equal Opportunities of Luxembourg.

Ms. Mutsch (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the United Kingdom presidency for taking the initiative to hold this open debate, which accords the fight against human trafficking the importance it deserves. This morning's briefings rightly underlined the need to redouble efforts to combat this scourge, which affects millions of people.

Luxembourg fully supports the intervention to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Luxembourg is aware of its responsibilities as a country of transit and destination. No country can claim to be spared from the scourge of trafficking in human beings.

The overwhelming testimony of survivors of the slave trade shows how much the latter is the very negation of humanity. Let us recall here the words (see S/PV.7685) of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, who exposed the sexual slavery perpetrated by Da'esh against civilian populations, in particular Yazidis in Iraq. It is mainly women and children who are targeted, and the international community must assume its responsibility to protect these populations.

Displaced persons regardless of their status — whether internally displaced persons, migrants or refugees — are particularly vulnerable. That should be borne in mind at the time of the adoption, in 2018, of the draft global compact on refugees and the draft global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In the European context, Luxembourg is committed to trafficking that affects migrants and refugees. My country is therefore stepping up its participation in Operation SOPHIA by providing a second maritime surveillance aircraft. The objective of this European Union operation, authorized by the Security Council, is to dismantle the economic model of the networks of human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean Sea. It has already saved thousands of lives.

Also at European level, we participated in the Dutch initiative "Team Work!" to strengthen cooperation against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of exploitation through labour.

Luxembourg made the fight against trafficking in human beings a priority of its presidency of the Benelux Union in 2016. We have renewed cooperation

between our three countries and brought together actors on the ground, including non-governmental organizations, in order to provide better assistance to victims of trafficking.

At the national level, our policy to combat trafficking in persons employs a horizontal approach that involves all stakeholders. In 2009, we set up an inter-ministerial monitoring committee, whose work has led in particular to the adoption by the Government of a national action plan agaomst trafficking in persons, in December 2016. In my role as Minister of Equal Opportunities, I presente!, along with the Minister of Justice, a strategy to regulate prostitution, which provides for the strengthening of the legislative framework. A draft law that aims to punish the clients of victims of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation is being considered by Parliament. Finally, a national awareness campaign was launched at the initiative of the monitoring committee to better detect and counter the trafficking in persons in all its forms.

The perpetrators of human trafficking must be held accountable for their actions, whether at the national or international level. Here too, the International Criminal Court has a role to play. The Rome Statute identifies trafficking in persons, women and children in particular, as a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population and with knowledge of the attack. Justice, by its punitive and dissuasive nature, is indispensable to our collective action.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain.

Ms. Montserrat (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank everyone for their insightful contributions and their commitment to combating the trafficking in persons. Putting an end to the trafficking in persons in general and in conflict situations in particular goes beyond the efforts of one specific region or country. It requires the efforts of all. As the President of the Government of Spain stated here at the Security Council in December 2016 (see S/PV.7847), the trafficking in persons is the commercialization of the bodies and the dignity of the human being and a reincarnation of slavery in the midst of the twenty-first century.

When Spain convened an open debate on this very topic last December and put forward the first Security Council resolution on the trafficking of persons in conflict situations (resolution 2331 (2016)), it did so on the basis that national justice systems can crumble in conflict situations, making action by the Security Council necessary in such circumstances. With today's debate, we are contributing to the development of a counter narrative to oppose those criminal networks, armed groups and terrorist groups that use trafficking in persons in conflict situations as a form of financing and as a recruitment tool or forced labour, which prolong conflicts.

Resolution 2331 (2016), put forward by Spain here at the Security Council, strengthens the legal framework in various areas, including with regard to sanctions, accountability, financial flows, and protection and assistance to victims, paying special attention to women and girls, especially when trafficked for sexual exploitation — and without forgetting that men and boys are also victims of trafficking.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations has sparked immense media interest, particularly when it is used by terrorists groups such as Da'esh, Boko Haram or Al-Shabaab. Nonetheless, civil society has reiterated on numerous occasions that the response of the United Nations remains fragmented. That is why I would like to highlight the fact that our States are gathered today because an open debate was convened by the United Kingdom as President of the Security Council. I would therefore like to thank the United Kingdom for the opportunity to address a subject of this magnitude. In that regard, I would like to congratulate our neighbours, the United Kingdom, for the recent establishment of the Group of Friends on Modern-day Slavery, which will surely continue to contribute to the joint efforts of all countries.

Let me now focus on three specific issues.

First, more information and coordination are required with regard to the use of trafficking in persons by armed groups in conflict situations. We must work together with all stakeholders. In that way, we could paint as detailed a picture as possible of the routes or hotspots of a conflict in which there are signs of trafficking in persons in all its forms. The findings would set out the road map of practical measures that should be adopted.

Secondly, above and beyond the Security Council, all Member States must respond to trafficking in persons in conflict situations in a coordinated and consistent manner, both through cooperation among our intelligence, police and justice units, and with the

private sector and civil society, as well as within the United Nations framework. It is crucial to pay special attention to the source of financing for trafficking. A good way to address the scourge in all its complexity is through national plans and legislation. At the end of 2015, Spain adopted a comprehensive national plan to combat trafficking in persons, which strengthens coordination in all areas. Spain is committed to the fight against trafficking in persons and sexual slavery.

Thirdly and lastly, I would like to highlight the fact that victims must be the focus of any policy we develop to combat the trafficking in persons in conflict situations, in terms of both assistance and accountability. In that regard, Spain will support any initiative that promotes the preservation of the proof that would make accountability possible.

The next five years is a historic opportunity for the fight against one of the worst forms of exploitation and slavery to be at the centre of the priorities of the United Nations. Spain is committed, and every one of us here is aware of the path and the direction that we must take. All that is left for us to do is to agree on the effective practical measures to be taken, and that is within everyone's reach. Let us work together.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia.

Mrs. Yembise (Indonesia): Let me first thank the United Kingdom for convening today's open debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers.

Governments nowadays face increasing challenges as the movement of people becomes more and more prevalent and complex in nature. Conflicts, wars and social unrest in many parts of the world have exacerbated the complexity and have forced people to leave their homes. The trafficking of vulnerable people, especially women and children, who should be protected in conflict situations, is a dreadful crime. Trafficking in persons is a serious violation of human rights that must continue to be condemned in the strongest sense possible. There is an immediate obligation to identify and provide safety and protection to victims of human trafficking while addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including women and children, and taking into account prevailing national laws and circumstances.

The problem of trafficking is cross-border in nature and only a cross-border response and cooperation can succeed. Indonesia is co-chair, with Australia, of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime,. It has more than 48 members, including international organizations. The Bali Process recently established a Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks Involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons. During its initial Joint Period of Action, eight countries conducted separate but coordinated law enforcement operations against criminal syndicates.

Indonesia is also in the process of ratifying the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Indonesia believes that coordination and cooperation across the whole region is essential in the handling of human trafficking.

We acknowledge the need for robust mechanisms that promote international cooperation, including law enforcement cooperation, mutual legal assistance and extradition. We encourage further law enforcement capacity-building to combat people smugglers and human traffickers. Indonesia fully supports every effort to stop the perpetrators of human trafficking, especially parties that exploit the vulnerabilities of populations affected by conflict.

The best way to narrow the chances of armed groups, terrorists and transnational criminal networks to exploit the vulnerabilities of civilians caught in conflict is to de-escalate or prevent the conflict and human trafficking.

Given the nexus between conflict-prevention and sustaining peace, it is important to have a comprehensive approach whereby socioeconomic development and security challenges are addressed simultaneously. Peacekeeping efforts should be geared towards building trust and confidence among all parties. Recognizing and responding to human trafficking should be part of the training activities of humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers. All those to be deployed in conflict and post-conflict zones need to be trained on the gender perspective and conflict-related crimes. On our part, the Indonesian National Armed Forces Peacekeeping Mission Centre at Sentul, Indonesia, has developed and implemented an integrated gender perspective in predeployment training for Indonesian and regional peacekeepers.

In conclusion, let us spare no effort in fighting human trafficking. Indonesia, as a candidate for a

non-permanent membership of the Security Council in 2019-2020, remains committed to working with the international community to put an end to human trafficking and to the misery it has caused.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of Labour and Social Justice of Romania.

Mrs. Vasilescu (Romania) (*spoke in French*): I would like to commend the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council for having convened this open debate. This is a timely discussion of a crucial issue with global repercussions. No State Member of the United Nations can escape the contemporary scourge of trafficking in the most precious commodities: dignity and human life.

Romania supports the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I express our firm commitment to the Union's efforts to combat human trafficking, modern slavery and other forms of exploitation linked to trafficking. Resolution 2331 (2016), adopted last December, provides an excellent framework to continue to make progress in this area. We need to consider this in further depth in order to address together the causes and effects of trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

We must make full use of all existing mechanisms for fighting money-laundering and financing of terrorism in order to expose traffickers, prosecute them, freeze their assets and to stop these illegal flows. The response to human trafficking must be robust and occur on several levels: security, law enforcement, the protection of persons and accountability. Human trafficking in conflict situations undermines the rule of law and leads to the development of other forms of organized crime. It therefore has the potential to further increase insecurity in the region.

The fight against the activities of non-State actors using legal and institutional mechanisms is becoming difficult. Therefore, with respect to terrorist groups, we must adapt our tools and mechanisms against the traffic to their versatile and flexible structures. The United Nations process under way currently, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, could help to target our common response to the object of our debate today. The General Assembly's high-level review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in October will be a good opportunity in that regard. The same applies to the upcoming negotiations on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, dealing with trafficking in migrants and contemporary forms of slavery. Romania will contribute fully to the thematic sessions and to negotiations on the Global Compact, given the need for a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to all forms of human mobility, without losing sight of the potential for abuses.

In all issues related to trafficking, prevention plays a key role. Romania, too, has confronted human trafficking networks for many years, although they are not necessarily linked to conflict situations. Our anti-trafficking agency, the main institution at the national level, pays particular attention to prevention campaigns, protection and assistance to victims. We are also focusing on helping victims of trafficking recover and their reintegration into normal life. Romania remains firmly committed to every effort to fight human trafficking in all situations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Chvojka (Czech Republic): I thank the United Kingdom presidency for organizing this open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. Human trafficking remains one of the most common violations of human rights worldwide. Unfortunately, the Czech Republic is no exception.

We are a target and transit country for women and children subjected to sex trafficking and for men and women subjected to forced labour. According to our annual *Trafficking in Human Beings Report*, 50 victims of human trafficking were identified in the Czech Republic, mainly from Ukraine, Nigeria, Romania or Hungary. In 2016, the Czech Government adopted a new national strategy to combat trafficking in human beings. The strategy emphasizes the need for a coordinated approach in prosecuting human trafficking and pays increased attention to assistance rendered to victims. Its priorities are the prevention of forced labour and trafficking in children. Gender equality and respect for the special needs of more vulnerable victims are its basic principles.

The main framework for practical assistance to victims is the Government programme on support for and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings. Annually, more than 50 victims of various forms of human trafficking enter the programme. The programme represents a very effective tool of victim

support and very often leads to increased chances of the successful prosecution of perpetrators.

To keep the programme functional, we must apply wider preventive and educational measures. Every year, the Czech Government provides financial resources to non-governmental organizations focusing on preventive and informative activities on human trafficking. One such preventive activity is social counselling aimed at the potential victims of trafficking, provided through low-threshold counselling centres run by specialized non-governmental organizations.

I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to discuss this crucial issue. We need to send a clear message to all of the victims of human trafficking. We insist on their dignity and human rights, and we are ready to use every chance to finally make human trafficking a thing of the past.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Family and Social Policies of Turkey.

Ms. Kaya (Turkey): We thank the United Kingdom for organizing today's debate and the Secretary-General and the distinguished briefers for their statements. We find this open debate timely and relevant, following the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on this topic (resolution 2331 (2016)), which Turkey co-sponsored in December 2016.

Human trafficking constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of human beings. It is rightly described as modern-day slavery. It is also a serious transnational organized crime, which has immense costs on the social and economic fabric of our societies. Due to its geographical location, Turkey has been adversely affected by the rising trends in human trafficking and related criminal practices. In the crises in our region, criminal and terrorist networks resort to different forms of exploitation of human beings and commit gender-based sexual violence and the forced recruitment of adults and children to fund and sustain their operations.

Speakers before me have recalled how terrorist organizations such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab resort to human trafficking for forced labour and enslavement. It is also important to emphasize that the terrorist organization of the Kurdistan Workers' Party and the Democratic Union Party (PKK/PYD) also widely employs methods that exploit human beings, particularly through the forced recruitment of children and young women. Turkey is actively combating terrorist organizations such as Da'esh and the PKK/PYD, and we support our partners in similar efforts. In doing so, we recognize that we must address the vulnerabilities of victims trapped in conflicts and ensure accountability for the perpetrators.

Turkey remains strongly committed to eradicating human trafficking through a progressive approach. In that regard, we have introduced administrative and legal measures that aim to combat the problem through prevention, protection, prosecution, and cooperation. At the international level, Turkey is a party to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its relevant supplementary protocols. At the regional level, since February 2016 Turkey has been party to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. We participate in the related activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and engage bilaterally with States in Eurasia.

At the domestic level, our efforts are focused on strengthening our legislation and improving the implementation of our obligations. In 2002, we formed a national task force for combating human trafficking and since then have developed and implemented two national action plans, designed to implement international standards in the fight against human trafficking, eradicate that scourge in Turkey and strengthen our institutions. More recently, in March 2016, we issued a regulation on combating human trafficking and protecting its victims, for which we have established a Department for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, tasked with its effective implementation. The Department is responsible for conducting projects with a diverse group of stakeholders. In that regard, we have put in place initiatives such as a multilingual 157 helpline and programmes for victim support and voluntary safe return.

Human trafficking cannot be prevented by Governments acting individually. We should recalibrate and coordinate our ongoing efforts in line with the commitments that we agreed to under the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1). As the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world, including more than 3.2 million Syrians and Iraqis, Turkey will continue to take measures necessary to prevent the human trafficking, forced labour and enslavement of those who have already fled the horrors of conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Great Britain for organizing today's open debate on the problem of combating human trafficking. This issue has recently become firmly established on the Security Council's agenda. However, we would like to emphasize that by its nature, the problem of human trafficking should not be dealt with through the Security Council, whose mandate is not appropriate to the topic. It will lead to duplication of the functions of the main organs of the United Nations and an expanded interpretation of the Council's mandate. Crimes such as human trafficking are transnational in nature, and all States should take part in tackling it. We believe firmly that the most appropriate forum for coordinating efforts on the issue should continue to be the General Assembly, since it represents all States, without exception.

The President of the General Assembly recently appointed the Permanent Representatives of Greece and Qatar as coordinators of the negotiation process to prepare for a high-level meeting of the Assembly to review the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combating Trafficking in Persons. The first consultations have already been held, and it is now up to us to see this effort through. In that connection, we urge all States to take a serious and constructive approach to preparing and conducting the review of the Global Plan of Action in order to evaluate the existing problems and develop further action to combat human trafficking.

Unfortunately, the main problem in combating the evil of human trafficking consists in what it looks like and what to call it. In the year since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations has been concerned with the issue of what to call human trafficking in the modern world. Today, however, it is clear that in our quest for the correct name, we have missed the most important thing, without which it will essentially be impossible to overcome human trafficking, which is that we have not been able to unite our efforts — the efforts of the countries of destination, transit and supply of this living commodity. Every State has a different potential and different capacities in the fight against human trafficking; some have the resources for it, some have less and some none at all. It is evident to us today that we have to establish a dialogue of engagement between developed and developing States, and that the place for that dialogue should definitely not be the Security Council, which States hardly associate with a place for dialogue.

If we continue to ignore each other, to launch competing initiatives on trafficking and to exploit positions of privilege, including membership of the Security Council, human trafficking will continue to flourish. In that regard, we urge all interested States to coordinate their efforts in an open and predictable forum in which all States, without exception, can participate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Bokhari (Norway): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country, Norway.

Trafficking in persons, including forced labour and slavery, is a grave violation and abuse of human rights. It also constitutes a serious form of organized crime, sometimes supported by State actors and often conducted with impunity. Such criminal networks exploit displaced persons and have a catalytic effect on migration. Billions of dollars are generated each year, fuelling conflict and terrorism and hampering development. Women and children are particularly exposed to trafficking, often in the form of sexual slavery and forced labour or recruitment as child soldiers.

For terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida, trafficking and slavery do lasting harm to individuals and are tools used to humiliate and terrorize populations, as well as to raise money for their operations. Children in armed conflict also need to be protected from trafficking and exploitation. International law has to be respected, and parties to a conflict must take responsibility and act to protect and address violations and abuses. The Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) confirms the existence of an evolving criminal infrastructure designed to exploit refugees and migrants through human trafficking, and sexual slavery.

We must make better and more effective use of international organizations and instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to ensure effective international cooperation across borders and regions. As trafficking in persons and armed conflicts converge and become global security challenges, we need to develop combined

tools from the security and development communities. Those threats are both causes and effects of conflict.

We need to improve conflict analysis and cooperation through data sharing and monitoring between countries and across United Nations entities. We welcome Secretary-General Guterres' initiative to strengthen the United Nations conflict and threat analysis in that regard.

We also need better gender-disaggregated data and documentation in order to develop effective responses and services for female and male victims of sexual exploitation. Trafficking has a clear gender dimension, which is also recognized in Security Council resolution 2331 (2016).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives us an important platform to tackle trafficking in a more holistic manner. Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peaceful societies, specifically calls for the end of abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. Implementation of the women and peace and security agenda brings women's voices and experience to the table. Again, the peace, security and development architecture needs to be coherent and mutually supportive.

The Nordic countries are strongly committed to tackling all forms of trafficking and organized crime. We are already deeply engaged in anti-trafficking programs, in partnership with developing countries and regional organizations. We believe it is important to further strengthen multilateral cooperation and partnerships. In line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), we also need to engage more women and young people in both peacebuilding activities and actions to combat human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I welcome the Security Council presidency of the United Kingdom and thank it for having convened this open debate and for the presidential note (S/PRST/2015/25), which deals with what is perhaps one of the most tragic topics: the trafficking of persons in armed conflicts.

The statements we have heard this morning paint a picture of the horror that millions of people suffer due to trafficking of persons in armed conflicts and the challenges that the international community confronts in effectively addressing that phenomenon, which especially afflicts women and children. The trafficking of persons is the slavery of our times. It is not only an abomination of the past; millions of people today live in conditions of slavery. Most trafficking victims are vulnerable women and children, almost always tricked or abducted and forced to live a life of suffering, exploitation, torture or servitude. That cruel practice has become a global industry, and it must be decisively combated by all.

In September 2015, through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States committed to adopting measures relating to the trafficking of persons. As the Secretary-General himself expressed in his statement this morning, the Agenda is a valuable tool for all States, in keeping with our commitments, to contribute to the eradication of that scourge.

The figures are disheartening, and Colombia is no stranger to this issue. That is why I wish to reiterate the unswerving commitment of the Government to the fight against that phenomenon, which has a nature and effects that lead to human rights abuses. Consequently, we believe it is essential for our efforts to be able to bolster countries' capabilities to more comprehensively combat this kind of crime.

Between 2012 and 2016, the Government of Colombia assisted 199 citizens who were victims of human trafficking, and in 2016 alone, we provided immediate assistance to 37 victims of reported cases of human trafficking. Similarly, in 2016 there were 28,052 undocumented — and often exploited — migrants in Colombia, most coming from countries of our region and other parts of the world that use this transit route to countries in the North.

That is why, among other legal and governmental measures, we joined the initiative of the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, which the Government will support with a view to assisting and protecting victims and vulnerable people, as well as advancing prevention, investigation and prosecution efforts.

Echoing the appeals of the Secretary-General and the President this morning, only together can we tackle this scourge and in that way seek to free our countries from the transnational organized crime that profits from it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Marcelino (Portugal): I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council for convening this ministerial open debate on trafficking in human beings and for following up on the debate organized last year by Spain. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, the United Kingdom's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Mr. Kevin Hyland, and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their comprehensive briefings.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Trafficking in human beings is an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being and is one of the most serious violations of human rights. Every year, millions of men, women and children are victims of being trafficked for various kinds of abuses and exploitation.

It is a complex reality, often involving transnational organized criminal networks that prey on the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of trafficked persons. Trafficking in human beings is often exacerbated in situations of conflict and humanitarian crisis and isaggravated by factors such as poverty, gender inequality, unemployment, weak rule of law and poor governance. All that renders those caught in the crossfire disproportionately vulnerable to trafficking.

We note with concern the increasing trend of trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, in situations of conflict-related sexual violence used as a tactic of war by violent extremist groups.

To be effective, any intervention must be based on common and well-coordinated efforts. Bilateral, regional and international comprehensive cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination, including effective information-sharing, is crucial to addressing human trafficking resulting from conflict. This is a global issue that demands collective action.

The crime of trafficking in persons is generally under-recorded and under-reported. We must fight the culture of impunity for those who commit those crimes; the responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice. Portugal urges all States that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. My delegation looks forward to the high-level review of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, later this year.

Portugal has made significant efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings through the implementation of several national plans on human trafficking, developed with cross-sectoral involvement including the private sector and civil society organizations.

In 2008, Portugal created the Trafficking in Human Beings Observatory to collect and analyse data on trafficking. The third national plan against trafficking in human beings (2014-2017), currently being implemented, contains 53 policy measures. The third national plan against trafficking in human beings reflects my country's commitments, in particular within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

The efforts made by Portugal in combating trafficking in human beings have been recognized in several international forums, most recently by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe.

To conclude, in brief, trafficking in human beings is one of the most heinous crimes against human dignity. Preventing it and punishing the perpetrators and all those involved is critical to ensuring dignity and freedom for all, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with our collective efforts towards the consolidation of peace and security.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): Human trafficking and slavery in all their forms are among the most despicable crimes known to humanity, as they affect those most vulnerable, such as migrants and internally displaced persons, especially women and girls. When committed in conflict situations, such acts might even amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. The victims of these crimes are often subjected to organ harvesting, sexual exploitation, forced labour or forced marriage. Brazil supports efforts aimed at helping victims recover their dignity and ensuring that they have access to justice.

Displaced communities are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and enslavement by criminal groups and terrorist organizations. Long-term solutions can arise

only from multilateral approaches to peace and security that address the underlying causes of conflicts and firmly set dialogue and mediation as priorities. More often than not, military intervention leads to increased civilian suffering and vulnerability. The expansion of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant into Libyan territory is a reminder of the destabilization that may result from military action.

The international community can do more to combat this scourge. Little regard and few resources have been given to sustain peace in crisis or in post-conflict situations. Closer cooperation among States and international agencies can help rescue victims and bring traffickers to justice. Advancing the universality of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court would contribute to ensuring accountability for those responsible for such crimes, when committed in the context of an armed conflict.

Terrorism and transnational organized crime are different problems that require different remedies. The interrelationship between them may, obviously, arise under specific circumstances, but should in no way be deemed universal or predetermined. It is important to pay attention to the forum in which these issues should be primarily discussed. Terrorism, as a threat to international peace and security, should be addressed in the Council. Organized crime, in turn, remains primarily a domestic public-security issue. It is more appropriately addressed as a matter of enhanced international cooperation than as an issue pertaining to collective security.

While human trafficking and slavery occur in scenarios plagued by armed conflict, there are no automatic linkages between these phenomena. They also take place in situations that do not threaten international peace and security. For these issues to be effectively addressed by the United Nations in all their forms, the Security Council should be mindful of the mandate and technical expertise of the General Assembly and of the Human Rights Council, as well as of the crucial role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this realm.

Migration itself should not be criminalized or confused with the criminalization of trafficking in persons. Our actions should aim at protecting the rights of and providing assistance to those people who are forced to leave their homes and fall prey to human traffickers. The international community has a responsibility to act to find a solution of the refugee crisis. It is not coherent to make a case for the responsibility to protect and the protection of civilians while turning our backs on those fleeing conflict and persecution.

As my country's experience in granting humanitarian visas to Haitians since 2012 has shown, one of the most effective means of dismantling criminal human-trafficking networks is to provide regular and safe ways of entry for those forced to move.

Let us all work together to ensure that human trafficking and slavery in all their forms can be brought to a definitive end and that its victims can resume their lives with dignity and, above all, with hope.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the African Union.

Mr. António: Allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council, as well as on the priority your presidency has wisely chosen to give to the issue of conflict prevention in Africa during this month. I wish to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his inspiring remarks this morning. I also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yuri Fedotov; the United Kingdom Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Mr. Kevin Hyland; and Ms. Ilwad Elman, of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre, for their respective briefings.

Today's open debate is all the more fitting and timely given that it is taking place this month, during which we mark the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The annual observance of this Day offers an opportunity not only to honour the memory of the victims of that dark chapter of our history, but also to raise awareness about the dangers of what is commonly referred to as modern slavery. It is indeed extremely disturbing that two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery still exists today in many different forms and continues to claim millions of victims every day. According to the International Labour Organization, there are over 21 million children, women and men living in modern slavery, of whom approximately 3.7 million are to be found in Africa. These figures tell a devastating story of modern slavery that should serve as a wake-up call for the members of the international community to urgently work together to prevent and eradicate this scourge. This sense of

urgency has been rightfully captured in the recent resolution 2331 (2016), which urges decisive action to end human trafficking, including against terrorist and all armed groups.

If we are to make a tangible contribution to solving this complex problem, we must go beyond general statements on the need to address its various root causes and take concrete steps in this area. Our efforts should focus also on eradicating the different enablers of these horrific crimes, which notably include protracted armed conflicts as well as the spread of terrorism and organized crime. Equally important is the need to acknowledge the fact that the scope and severity of its causes have been aggravated by the ongoing migration crisis. Many recently published reports point out that criminal networks are taking advantage of the current migration crisis to force more people into bonded labour and other types of slavery. The devastating effects on refugees and asylum-seekers, who are among the most vulnerable people, cannot be overemphasized.

What is needed most is decisive action at the national, regional and international levels to uphold human dignity and strengthen the fight against these shameful practices that are unworthy of humankind. Against that background, in order to foster the implementation of the international legal framework on trafficking in persons, the African Union has adopted a range of policy instruments to prevent and combat human trafficking, namely, the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children; the Migration Policy Framework for Africa; and the African Union Commission Initiative Against Trafficking. Those instruments have provided the required push for action, and the number of countries that have enacted anti-trafficking legislation has more than doubled in recent years. Consequently, more and more convictions of traffickers have been made possible and, hopefully, an increasing number of victims are being rescued and protected.

Despite those efforts, human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants have remained a constant challenge on the African continent. We have an estimated 3.7 million African men, women and children still trapped in forced labour and working under extreme coercion, largely in the informal economy. The African continent needs to step up its efforts, in coordination with the international community, to combat and eradicate all of those criminal forms of exploitation of human beings.

The President: I now give the floor to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.

Ms. Bhoola: It is an honour for me to brief the Council today in my capacity as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences. I thank the Government of the United Kingdom for convening this open debate and for the invitation to participate, as well as for its leadership in combating modern slavery.

My predecessor in the mandate and I have conducted numerous country visits to meet with a broad range of Government and civil-society organizations and survivors to assess the prevalence of slavery and related practices in contravention of the Slavery Convention of 1926 and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956. Member States have a duty to uphold the universal protection against slavery and the slave trade and to bring perpetrators who violate this norm to justice. Nevertheless, as we have heard this morning, slavery and related practices continue to occur on an unprecedented scale, affecting millions of men, women and children. In conflict situations, terrorists and non-State armed groups have reverted to the most extreme forms of slavery, in which young girls and women are owned, exploited, sold and traded in markets and on the Internet. Boys have been forced to carry arms and commit acts of violence against their own communities.

One year ago, I and the Special Rapporteur on the right to health and Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, conducted a joint country mission to Nigeria, where we met with young men who had been forced by Boko Haram to carry arms, engage in combat, destroy their own villages and perform forced labour in the form of cleaning and construction work during captivity. We met girls in internally displaced persons camps, barely children themselves, who have had babies as a result of forced marriage and sexual slavery. Many of them said they were unable to return to their communities, as they were ostracized for being the wives of Boko Haram and their children were despised for being of bad blood. Despite significant Government and civil-society

efforts, they continue to be affected by gaps in physical and psychological health care, food security, education, livelihood support and access to justice. Those gaps can fuel an increasing cycle of violence, in which girls are vulnerable to being forced into transactional sex in order to earn a living or, even worse, to conduct suicide bombings.

What can the Security Council do? First, the Council and member States can ensure that the multiple ways in which slavery, forced labour and trafficking all intersect in conflict receive a coherent global multifaceted response, with strong leadership within the United Nations system through continued attention to those issues and oversight on the part of the United Nations and through its Member States' responses. In that regard, I would urge Member States to engage with target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a multistakeholder partnership aimed at implementing that target and which calls for the eradication of child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. Achieving Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7 is a precondition for achieving many of the other SDGs, especially those on gender equality and economic empowerment and the right to health in peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Secondly, the Council can strengthen the normative framework for ending slavery, forced labour and human trafficking by promoting increased ratifications of international human rights norms and standards, including the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29) of the International Labour Organization. Member States should be reminded to ensure that dedicated legislation to ensure the implementation of international standards is backed up with robust national action plans. In addition, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery requires ratifying States to inform the Secretary-General of laws they have adopted to prohibit slavery and criminalize enslavement, and I would encourage Security Council members to support him in upholding that role.

Thirdly, the Council can ensure the strengthening of humanitarian responses, as well as adopting the strongest financial and economic measures, to stem the transnational corruption and crime that fuels conflict.

Lastly, the Security Council can promote national and international criminal justice to bring criminals to account, including for enslavement, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Access to justice remains a remote prospect for the millions subjected to trafficking, forced labour and slavery in conflict. Prevention, protection and support for survivors are also prerequisites for the restoration of peace and security. In that regard, I would urge Member States to provide funding for the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which prioritizes projects that provide specialized assistance to women and children subjected to slavery in conflict and humanitarian crises.

The President: I now give the floor to the Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Ms. Jarbussynova: I wish to express my deep gratitude to the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council for convening this timely high-level debate.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as a comprehensive Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regional organization, sets the promotion and protection of human rights at the core of any viable security strategy. The OSCE pays considerable attention to the perilous links between crisis situations and the risks of trafficking. I wish, therefore, to concentrate today on the nexus between emergencies and human exploitation in the OSCE region and on much needed risk-mitigation and counter-trafficking programmes.

In 2016, my Office compiled a survey of selected aspects of the OSCE action plan against trafficking in persons, so as to better understand developments and challenges in their implementation. Although the data show some progress across the areas of prevention, prosecution and protection, they also reveal that considerable work remains to be done. That becomes all the more urgent if one considers the latest trends in the trafficking in human beings.

As immigration policies tighten, migration routes become longer and more hazardous. People on the move, especially women and children, are particularly at risk of falling into the hands of human traffickers. Very often what begins as a humanitarian crisis swiftly grows into a security crisis. The task facing us is formidable. Of the more than 1 million irregular migrants who surged into Europe in 2015, more than 90 per cent used

services provided by 40,000 individuals operating in loose criminal networks and who continue to often exploit irregular migrants after arrival. Since 2014, more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine have been forced to leave their homes. How can we counteract that and meaningfully address the magnitude of those transnational challenges? How can we remedy the fact that, all too often, criminal networks flourish, perpetrators go unpunished, the level of convictions remains low worldwide and victims fail to be compensated for their material and moral damages? I believe that national efforts, however effective, cannot fully tackle the complexity of this crime. In the spirit in which Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations was forged, it is imperative that diverse actors and first responders engage in multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral and transnational efforts, wherein inclusion, collaboration and the sharing of best practices become watchwords in our combined endeavours towards ensuring more effective investigations, timely prosecutions and the prompt identification of victims.

Given the leverage of the OSCE and its multidimensional approach, my team and I have striven, since the onset of both the migration crisis and, indeed, the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, to counter the accompanying exploitation of human life by traffickers. It therefore gives me great pride to have piloted the OSCE project entitled Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes, in which we are training law-enforcement officials, prosecutors, labour inspectors, financial investigators and civil society representatives in an intensive simulation exercise. In that endeavour, I am extremely proud of our efficient cooperation with the United Nations family, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration, as well as the European Police Office and INTERPOL. Likewise, I remain committed to imparting best practices to the staff of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine on how to monitor and report trafficking-related trends in the context of a conflict situation. Such action is imperative given that, despite the seriousness of those crimes, human trafficking in the context of crisis-driven situations continues to go largely unnoticed by both governmental and non-governmental actors.

I sincerely hope that we at the OSCE can capitalize on those achievements in the upcoming regional consultations for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, thereby ensuring a human rights-centred approach.

Further guiding our work is the conviction that it is important to investigate the link between terrorism and trafficking. To that end, we are supporting a group of experts who are addressing that issue with a special focus on youth trafficked for terrorism.

We also recognize that it is important to take advantage of the collective purchasing power of Governments to eliminate the market for goods and services produced by trafficking labour. The second of our flagship projects in that regard seeks to prevent trafficking in human beings in supply chains through Government procurement and measures. To that end, I commend the Government of the United Kingdom for supporting our efforts in encouraging consumers, campaigners and investors to scrutinize businesses so as to end modern-day slavery.

Finally, given that children and unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, next month's seventeenth high-level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, to be held in Vienna, will focus on child trafficking. Given that almost one in five trafficking victims across the OSCE region is a child, the aim of the two-day conference is to enhance the coherence of international efforts and to develop more integrated, effective and expert recommendations to adequately respond to child trafficking in a manner that respects human rights.

We owe that to children, but also to men and women everywhere, regardless of age, status, origin or, indeed, whether they are fleeing crisis or not. Despite the scale and breadth of the challenges that we face, I am convinced that close cooperation with international and local partners will allow us to make a significant contribution to highlighting and mitigating the scourge of human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Joanne Adamson, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Ms. Adamson: I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Hyland, Ms. Elman and Mr. Fedotov for their briefings.

I speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia

and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to congratulate the United Kingdom for convening this open debate and to commend its keen commitment to addressing the issue of trafficking in human beings and forced labour in conflict during its presidency of the Security Council. We have built on the momentum generated by previous presidencies to address this issue, and we look forward to the continuous commitment of the international community to addressing this scourge.

Trafficking in human beings is a grave violation or abuse of human rights and a serious form of organized crime. The prohibition on trafficking in human beings and forced labour is expressly set forth in Article 5 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Furthermore, in its new Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy, the EU has recognized the need to counter the spillover of insecurity that might originate from conflicts, ranging from trafficking and smuggling to terrorism.

We reiterate that we stand behind the commitments in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to combat human trafficking, including through targeted measures to identify, protect and assist victims, as well as to prevent human trafficking among those affected by displacement, while taking into account the fact that women and children are in particularly vulnerable situations. We believe that it is important to strengthen multilateral cooperation and partnerships, and, in line with resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), we also need to engage more women and young people in both peacebuilding activities and actions against human trafficking.

We welcome the report (S/2106/949) submitted by the Secretary-General in November 2016 on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons. We note with attention the nexus between conflict and trafficking in human beings, which can take, in that context, many despicable forms. We particularly note the links between conflict, trafficking in human beings and other forms of crime. Trafficking is gender-specific. The most recent EU data show that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation continues to be the most widespread form encountered by authorities, and the majority of its victims are women and girls. Moreover, according to the same EU data, trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation affects primarily men and boys. In that respect, we call for a more gender-specific, targeted approach in all actions against trafficking in human beings.

We recall the need to focus on the prevention of trafficking in human beings in all its forms. Any other approach comes too late for the victims of that deplorable crime. In that respect, ensuring accountability for the perpetrators is essential as a deterrent. We must follow the financial trails and use all the available investigative tools and techniques to prosecute and bring to justice the perpetrators. By upholding and promoting international standards, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, and other international legal instruments, we contribute to ensuring strong foundations for the rule of law. We need to renew and invigorate our efforts to implement the existing legal architecture.

The EU has built an ambitious, gender-specific, child-sensitive and comprehensive legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in human beings. Anti-trafficking actions also form a key part of our external policies and funding, and the EU continues to cooperate with and support United Nations agencies.

We recognize that instability creates an ideal environment for the criminal activities of traffickers. We are therefore actively supporting all United Nations-led efforts to end the political and security crises in Syria and Libya. We are also prioritizing activity in connection with counter-terrorism, working with partners throughout the world to address threats from all terrorist organizations, including those like Da'esh and Boko Haram, which have clearly and quite publicly exploited and trafficked women and girls for their own objectives. We need to understand further the links between terrorist organizations and the organized criminal groups that carry out the trafficking of people and other illicit commodities. We need to actively pursue an agenda to increase women's participation in peace processes and in encountering violent extremism so as to ensure effective measures and solutions. We must work together to do all we can to stop this multiple scourge on our societies.

I have a much longer statement, but in the interest of time I will stop here. The full version of our statement has been distributed.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): We thank the United Kingdom for this opportunity to speak on human trafficking in conflict and on modern slavery. The prohibition of slavery is one of the very rare norms of international law applicable at all times in all places to all actors. States are under legal obligation to criminalize, investigate, prosecute and punish slavery wherever it occurs. Over 90 per cent of countries have legislation in place criminalizing human trafficking. Yet estimates suggest that 46 million people have fallen victim to modern slavery and human trafficking, and convictions for those crimes amount to a mere fraction of the total number of perpetrators. The impunity gap is glaring, in spite of the strong universal legal norm.

Resolution 2331 (2016) on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, adopted last December, was the first-ever Council resolution on the issue. It identified a correlation between human trafficking, sexual violence, armed conflict, terrorism and transnational organized crime. It also highlighted the gender-specific implications of human trafficking in conflict.

Over 70 per cent of trafficking victims are women and girls. This is why it is particularly important to explore the gender dimensions of modern slavery — which was the main topic of a ministerial-level side event organized jointly by the United Kingdom, Nigeria and Liechtenstein this past Monday. We hope to take from that event concrete actions that the international community can implement in its efforts to end and prevent slavery, particularly as it pertains to female victims.

Last June, Liechtenstein organized a two-day workshop, together with the United Kingdom Mission and the United Nations University, on ways the Security Council can address and tackle human trafficking in conflict. The resulting report identified 10 ideas for action on the part of the Security Council, some of which were reflected in both the report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons (S/2016/949) and resolution 2331 (2016).

One of the central conclusions was the need for a paradigm shift, meaning recognition that national criminal justice responses may need to be supported by other forms of Security Council leverage — normative, financial and technological — and the need for innovative approaches in the fight against modern slavery. Businesses using forced labour currently generate estimated annual profits of $150 billion. One obvious innovative approach is to involve financial institutions in detecting and disrupting financial flows associated with human trafficking — to "follow the money".

To further explore that avenue, we are organizing a two-day workshop with the United Nations University at the end of the month. It will bring together leaders from the financial sector, including financial regulators, investigators and prosecutors, and representatives of Member States and of civil society. We will discuss the nature of the financial sector's exposure to modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour, risks associated with that exposure and measures the financial sector can take to combat those crimes, as well as the role of different actors in protecting the financial sector against involvement in modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour. The outcome of the workshop will be a limited set of concrete, actionable ideas and recommendations to assist the financial sector, regulators and other stakeholders in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking.

While the Council has underscored that acts or offences associated with human trafficking in conflict may constitute war crimes, it has failed to acknowledge that they may also amount to crimes against humanity. The full potential of international criminal justice needs to be exhausted if we are to be serious about eradicating slavery.

In her briefing before the Security Council in November 2016 (see S/PV.7806), International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda indicated that her Office would probe the trafficking of migrants out of Libya for evidence of war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. Hundreds of thousands of migrants are being smuggled from Libya into Europe. The International Organization for Migration estimates that up to 76 per cent of them have fallen victim to practices amounting to human trafficking. Women and children usually bear the brunt of those crimes. We look forward to receiving the results of that probe and hope it will provide us with a better understanding of how and when human trafficking may amount to atrocity crimes and ways we can use the relevant tools available to us.

The upcoming report by the Secretary-General is an opportunity to broaden the approach to both the issue itself and its associated terminology. It is a cross-cutting issue relevant to all of the pillars of the United Nations and an integral part of the commitments made by Member States, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We hope that the Council will remain seized of this important issue, and we look forward to presenting the results from our efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking at the next open debate on the matter.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to convey my thanks to the United Kingdom for organizing this open debate, and to the Secretary-General and the briefers for their inputs.

I align myself with the statement to be made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The nexus between conflict-related situations and human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery and other similar practices and their cross-border dynamics have been well recognized and acknowledged by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/949) as a global challenge. But we all know that the global and growing phenomenon and challenge, with its acute humanitarian emergencies, is not the cause; it is just a symptom.

Underlying factors contributing to the phenomenon — particularly foreign aggression and intervention, occupation, war and protracted conflicts, political instability, terrorism, genocide and ethnic cleansing — create conditions under which millions of people become displaced in their own countries, or migrate or seek refuge overseas in a quest for safety, stability and opportunity, at the risk of becoming more vulnerable to crimes such as human trafficking, forced labour or contemporary forms of slavery. Dealing with those underlying causes is the primary responsibility of this Council, and if the Council chooses to ignore them and instead to focus on the symptoms in its debates and deliberations, it will certainly fail to address them in a proper manner.

Complex conflicts created in the Middle East and North Africa have led to the formation of many armed groups, terrorists and powerful international criminal networks and the upsurge in the exploitation of people through trafficking. Such exploitation takes many forms, including forced labour, slavery and recruitment by armed groups. Exploitation in those situations can occur because of the increased vulnerability of people fleeing conflict as a result of widespread human, material and economic losses and general erosion of the rule of law in the affected territories.

Under those circumstances, civilian populations are viewed by some armed groups as a resource or commodity to be trafficked. They are subjected to widespread targeting and killing of ethnic and religious minorities, abductions and cross-border trafficking of women and children, internally displaced and refugee women and girls, as well as forced marriages to fighters or wealthy foreigners, as in cases involving Da'esh, Boko Haram and similar terrorist and extremist groups. Those cases can emerge as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

First and foremost, we need full respect for Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, to deal with the underlying causes of the mass influx of persons. The next step would be to reaffirm the responsibility of all Governments to safeguard and protect the rights of refugees and migrants in accordance with international and domestic laws, reinforcing existing laws against all related illegal or violent acts.

The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is a basic document endorsed by the General Assembly. It should be fully and effectively implemented. The upcoming review of the Plan of Action later this year is a unique opportunity to analyse and evaluate that document at this critical juncture and to improve shared international efforts in and responsibility for combating trafficking in persons by all States Members of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening today's open debate and for its leadership and commitment with respect to this important issue.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

In recent years, the problem of human trafficking in conflict situations has become more exacerbated, both in scope and nature. We are witnessing an increasing

number of conflicts, and, unfortunately, human trafficking has become a regular feature and by-product of armed conflicts. Trafficking in persons in conflict situations has therefore reached an unprecedented scale.

In order to address the problem of human trafficking in conflict situations, the international community needs to focus simultaneously on prevention, protection and prosecution.

First, preventing violent conflict from occurring in the first place is the best guarantee to avert human trafficking from happening. That is one of the many reasons why Estonia fully supports the Secretary-General's emphasis on shifting from reaction to prevention. We commend his efforts to improve the United Nations capacity to take early action to prevent violent conflict and link the reform of the United Nations peace and security architecture with the reform of the United Nations development system. The United Nations needs to fulfil its core functions more effectively and in a more coherent manner.

Secondly, the international community needs to scale up protection efforts to ensure that those affected by conflict situations, especially women and girls, do not become vulnerable to traffickers. To achieve this, Estonia calls for better coordination among stakeholders and institutions. The Security Council could lead this process and foster greater normative, operational and strategic coherence across the United Nations system on the topic by engaging directly with relevant United Nations mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant agencies.

Thirdly, there must be no room for impunity, and all perpetrators must be held accountable. While the problem of trafficking is international in nature and therefore requires an international response, we must not forget that the primary responsibility for bringing those responsible to justice lies with the States. National policy and action programmes, including efforts to train immigration authorities, police forces, prosecutors and judges, are crucial to eradicating human trafficking.

While most countries have adopted legislation criminalizing human trafficking, attention still needs to be directed to enforcement. Accordingly, the States themselves and the international community must take action to prevent the culture of impunity from spreading. Furthermore, victims must have access to adequate assistance, support and effective remedies.

It is important for the international community to continue its efforts aimed at tackling and preventing the activities of armed groups, terrorist groups and transnational organized crime groups that are involved in human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery. Estonia believes that trafficking in persons in conflict situations must and can be eradicated. But to reach this goal, the fight needs to be stepped up. We remain ready to actively participate in future discussions to shape the international community's response to this global threat.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): First of all, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for organizing this very important open debate here at the Security Council.

Modern slavery is a crime of the twenty-first century. It is adaptive, cynical, sophisticated and extremely complex, and, as such, it is a crime that can be fought only by applying modern, innovative, adaptable approaches that utilize the findings of new research and the latest technology. Our actions need to be tailored to the specific case at hand. Moreover, our response has to be gender- and age-sensitive, as well as specific to the type of exploitation in question.

I would like to emphasize the need for the United Nations to play a leadership role in the fight against all forms of modern slavery. Today, we are discussing a topic that is complex. Numerous United Nations entities — not only the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, but also the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Women and UNICEF — are mandated to work on specific aspects of this challenge.

Unfortunately, duplication of efforts is frequent, and we can even find competition, and that helps no one. The complexity of the problem requires a

strengthened, better coordinated and coherent United Nations response, and it is also the very minimum that the millions of victims deserve. Moreover, this is exactly what the leaders of 193 States Members of the United Nations called for when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and what the Security Council requested in resolution 2331 (2016).

Taking all the foregoing into account, we encourage the Secretary-General to place this issue high on his agenda, align it with the prevention-focused reform efforts and play a proactive role in fostering better coordination and deepening cooperation, in particular within but also beyond the United Nations. Appointing a special envoy tasked with facilitating coordination, strengthening the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and/or convening a task force to guide how the United Nations response should be further strengthened are just some options.

I wish to announce that later this year, Hungary will host the regional consultations of the ILO-launched Alliance 8.7 initiative, the very purpose of which is to strengthen cooperation and coordination among United Nations entities and other key stakeholders. Hungary is looking forward to the 2017 review process of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and we are ready to participate actively in future discussions.

I truly believe that we have to raise awareness and make this crime as visible as we can throughout the world — through the media, through artistic expression, with journalists and artists working together. We have to make everybody aware of and understand this crime. Further, while we encourage the broadest possible ratification of the Palermo Protocol and the Protocol of 2014 to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, we wish to emphasize that effective implementation of these international instruments is also essential.

Ensuring accountability is a must. States should step up their efforts to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Given the transboundary nature of these crimes, international judicial and law enforcement cooperation is fundamental. In this context, I would also like to highlight the potential of the mechanism currently being established to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious crimes committed in Syria, including those that fall within the theme of today's open debate. Hungary has offered its voluntary contribution to the mechanism, and we encourage others to do the same.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mrs. Lodhi (Pakistan): My delegation wishes to thank the United Kingdom presidency for convening today's debate, which derives added importance now, given the current annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 79 per cent, almost 80 per cent, of the victims of trafficking are women and children, which is why combating that menace is both urgent and critical.

The scourge of slavery is an abomination, for it perpetuates the domination and degradation of human life. Modern slavery, unlike its traditional form, does not seek to own people. Rather, it aims to control them by exploiting their lives or the fruits of their labour. Sexual slavery in conflict situations, the trafficking of women and girls, and bonded and forced labour are all manifestations of that evil.

Transnational organized criminal gangs have become the primary purveyors of that human misery, which they perpetuate for financial gain. Their growing nexus with terrorists is a cause for global concern, not least because it has a direct bearing on international peace and security. Conflict situations, through their confluence of circumstance and opportunities, provide an ideal environment for such unholy alliances. Heinous crimes such as the enslavement of women and children, their sexual exploitation and their recruitment in armed groups are an outrage, not only to all norms of international law, but also to humankind itself. We must work together to find an end to that perversion.

Resolution 2331 (2016) of December 2016 was significant, not only as an unequivocal affirmation by the international community of its commitment to confront that menace, but also as a call for immediate action aimed at preventing, criminalizing and prosecuting those engaged in the trafficking in persons. While the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery is an end in itself, the interdiction of trafficking-based financial flows to terrorist groups must also be addressed.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children have served as a centrepiece of the

existing global framework aimed at combating transnational organized crime. They, in turn, have also inspired and informed domestic policies. As a party to the Convention, my country, Pakistan, has taken a number of legislative and administrative steps to address human trafficking.

The international community is currently witnessing human displacement on a historic and unprecedented scale. A pervasive sense of despondency and lack of prospects, induced by protracted conflict and insecurity, lies at the core of that phenomenon — one of the greatest tragedies of our times and a defining challenge of our era. Large sections of the respective populations, especially women and children, remain especially vulnerable. As the international community seeks to evolve cohesive and coordinated strategies to manage those movements, the interest and well-being of the most vulnerable must remain paramount in our policy responses. We must, in particular, ensure that the victims of such circumstance do not, in their quest to find safety and protection beyond their borders, become fresh prey to trafficking and abuse.

In Pakistan, we have lived this ideal by generously hosting our Afghan brothers and sisters for almost four decades and ensuring their safety in their temporary home. There is an urgent imperative to evolve a better and more coordinated global response. Close collaboration between States must underpin the success of that approach. Going forward, a fundamental challenge for the international community would be to strike the right balance between human rights and the law-enforcement aspects of anti-trafficking policies. Victims of trafficking must be protected, not penalized. Concerted efforts should also be made to address the underlying root causes. Unless we resolutely put out the fires of wars and conflicts that breed and fuel such phenomena, our efforts will at best be spasmodic and insufficient.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): The Holy See thanks the presidency of the United Kingdom for raising today's topic to the level of open debate in this Chamber.

In his words and actions, Pope Francis has made it very clear from his very first days as Pope that the fight against trafficking in persons would be one of the defining priorities of his papacy. He has not hesitated in defining it as a form of slavery, a crime against humanity, a shameful and grave violation of human rights, an atrocious scourge that is present throughout the world on a broad scale, including as it relates to tourism.

The flood of trafficking victims is the result of many tributaries. Among them are extreme poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a lack of access to education or scarce, even non-existent, employment opportunities. Human traffickers have no qualms about exploiting very vulnerable people escaping economic privation and natural disasters. In our day, however, wars and conflicts have become the prime driver of trafficking in persons. They provide an enabling environment in which traffickers can operate, as persons fleeing persecutions and conflicts are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Conflicts have created conditions in which terrorists, armed groups and transnational organized-crime networks can thrive by exploiting individuals and populations reduced to extreme vulnerability through persecution and multiple forms of violence.

In that context, my delegation once again expresses profound concern for the ancient Christian communities, the Yazidis and other religious and ethnic minority groups in Mesopotamia, who have been enslaved, sold, killed, trafficked and subjected to extreme forms of humiliation. The apparent lack of serious efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of such acts of genocide and massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law leaves many people perplexed and wondering how many more atrocities can be tolerated before the victims obtain rescue, protection and justice.

Once more, the Holy See would like to underline its constant and firm condemnation of the relative ease with which arms, even weapons of mass destruction, get into the hands of terrorists and armed groups, giving them the means to continue, with equal ease, to traffic and enslave individuals and even entire communities. The proliferation of arms, whether they are weapons of mass destruction or merely conventional, facilitates and prolongs violent conflicts that make people extremely vulnerable to traffickers and smugglers. As long as wars and conflicts rage, the trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation, forced labour and similar crimes will continue to flourish.

The Holy See therefore strongly appeals to States not to supply arms to groups or regimes that would most likely use them against their very own people, but to implement arms-related treaties strictly and to use the full force of the law in the fight against arms trafficking. Moreover, the criminalization of undocumented and irregular migrants exacerbates their vulnerabilities, drives them closer to the embrace of traffickers and to more extreme forms of exploitation, and renders them less likely to collaborate with the law-enforcement authorities to catch and punish the traffickers.

The challenge that trafficking in persons poses is immense and requires a commensurate response. Today, unfortunately, that response is still far from being equal to the challenge. As Pope Francis has noted several times, even though the international community has adopted numerous agreements and individual countries have adopted laws aimed at ending slavery in all its forms, even though various strategies to combat that phenomenon have been launched at both the national and the international levels, much more still needs to be done on the level of raising public awareness and effecting a better coordination of efforts by Governments, the judiciary, law-enforcement officials and social workers to save the millions of children, women and men who are still deprived of freedom and are forced to live in slave-like conditions.

In a special way, the Holy See urges the Security Council to play a greater and more active role in the fight against the scourge of trafficking in persons, primarily through its responsibility to prevent and end armed conflicts and to help in the consolidation of peace and development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to thank the United Kingdom for maintaining the momentum created in the previous debate on the topic (see S/PV.7847), held last December at the initiative of Spain.

Armed conflicts, terrorism and humanitarian crises have exposed individuals to increased risks of being trafficked in conflict zones and beyond. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to this risk; they make up, in fact, 79 per cent of all detected trafficking victims. In response to the scourge of trafficking, we must find answers, which will be as multifaceted as the terrible crime itself. At the international level, we need to aim for universal ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, in particular the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and ensure that we collect the data needed to fully understand the challenges, for instance by developing a comprehensive data-collection system.

We must follow a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and cross-border approach. We must increase synergies among United Nations agencies and develop a comprehensive joint United Nations response that includes the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Children and Armed Conflict. The United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons is one important instrument for such coordination.

We should apprise the Security Council of the link between human trafficking and human rights violations, and support the Council's ability to look into the connections of such trafficking with transnational organized crime and terrorism. Furthermore, we should use the upcoming review process of the Global Plan of Action on Trafficking and its high-level meeting in October to define appropriate responses to current challenges and discuss measures to implement trafficking-related Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we must go after the proceeds from human trafficking and ensure accountability.

At the national level, Germany has taken additional steps to address the growing challenges resulting from the recent large movements of refugees and migrants. We know that resettlement and relocation programmes can reduce the risk of vulnerable persons falling victim to greedy traffickers. With that in mind, we have adopted new legal measures to provide trafficking victims with residence permits. As one example, I would like to mention our programme through which over 1,000 Yazidi refugees have reached Germany, including Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

We also started an initiative with the United Nations Children's Fund and multiple national partners to protect those staying in refugee accommodations — in particular women and children — from violence, including

trafficking. As part of that initiative, minimum standards for protection were published in 2016. Specially trained coordinators will help implement those standards in up to 100 refugee accommodations until the end of 2017.

On a more general note, in 2016, we passed legislation to strengthen the protection of women and children. Among other measures, we adopted new criminal-law provisions.

To conclude my statement, I would like to reiterate how important it is for us all to work together and step up our efforts to address conflict and instability, because they represent the key push factors for migration and human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Let me first thank the United Kingdom presidency for convening this timely and pertinent open debate.

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Conflict and post-conflict settings often create the kind of conditions in which civilians are more exposed to the risk of becoming victims of trafficking. People fleeing from violence might become victims of trafficking along their migration route or after their arrival in their destination countries. Armed groups are also actively engaged in the trafficking of persons in the territories in which they operate.

There is much evidence that the smuggling of migrants, including from conflict and post-conflict settings, is increasingly intertwined with trafficking in persons. Well-managed regular migration and addressing the root causes of irregular migration are imperative to efforts to prevent the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons along migration routes. In that regard, we are also looking forward to the informal thematic session on the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims, in Vienna later this year. The event will take place in the framework of the preparatory process leading to the adoption of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

As a transit and destination country for the increased migration movements we see in Europe, Austria has scaled up training for immigration and asylum officers and the staff of reception centres, putting a special focus on identifying victims of human trafficking. At the same time, international cooperation in investigations into trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants has been intensified, inter alia, by establishing a Joint Operational Office against Human Smuggling Networks in Vienna as a regional platform and contact point for investigators from the countries of origin, transit and destination.

Trafficking, as many have pointed out, remains in large parts gender-specific. That has been confirmed by the findings of the 2016 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation still constitutes more than half of all trafficking cases, and women and girls are overwhelmingly affected by it. Violence against women, sexual exploitation and forced marriage — as often displayed in conflict settings — illustrate that gender inequality forms part of the overall problem.

Children are particularly vulnerable to becoming the victims of trafficking. The overall proportion of child victims of trafficking stands at 28 per cent. Thousands of children have been recruited by armed groups and are used as child soldiers. Girls are also forced into marriages and used for domestic work and sexual slavery. Boys — apart from being used in combat — are also exploited through forced labour, for example in the exploitation of natural resources.

In armed conflict situations, trafficking in persons is also used as a strategy to target ethnic and religious minorities. Austria continues to advocate for a victim-centred approach, with a focus on preventing trafficking in persons and protecting victims of trafficking or other serious forms of exploitation. It is also clear that States have the primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice and for ending the climate of impunity. In post-conflict settings, accountability and transitional-justice mechanisms, including at the international level, are key elements for sustainable peace.

It is important to recognize the links that exist between conflict, trafficking in persons and other forms of transnational organized crime. Understanding the correlations better will help us to improve our response aimed at preventing and combating trafficking.

With its portfolio of technical assistance programmes, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been and continues to be a central partner for assisting Member States in implementing practical measures to combat trafficking in persons. At this point, we would also like to acknowledge the valuable expertise and contribution of non-governmental organizations in the framework of the coordinated efforts on the national, regional and international levels. I am also very glad that we had the chance to hear from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, which provided a good example of what the regional organizations can contribute.

We reiterate the importance of the Palermo Protocol, which provides the internationally agreed definition of the crime of trafficking in persons, and focuses on the prevention of trafficking, the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. We invite all States to ratify it without delay and to ensure its effective implementation.

Finally, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking has facilitated direct assistance to approximately 2,500 trafficking victims each year. That covers only a fraction of all the victims, and many projects are waiting for the necessary funds. Yet it is still an immensely important contribution. We therefore encourage all States to contribute to the Trust Fund in order to ensure financing for many worthwhile programmes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to discuss an issue of such significant impact and importance in today's world, namely, trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We also wish the United Kingdom every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the remainder of the month.

As everyone will recall, just three months ago, we met in this same Chamber and adopted resolution 2331 (2016). My delegation sponsored it because we believed that it contributes to rendering more visible the horror in which thousands of men, women and children live as victims of forced labour, slavery and other similar practices, committed by terrorist organizations that are linked in networks of transnational organized crime.

As part of the priority given by the Government of Peru to combating this scourge, on 6 January the Peruvian Congress enacted a law incorporating in our Criminal Code the crimes of sexual exploitation and slavery and other forms of exploitation, with sentences of 10 to 15 years imprisonment. The crime of forced labour will be subject to a sentence of 6 to 12 years in prison. That is a major effort that has been complemented by the establishment of a national policy against trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation.

Peru, which respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, believes it is essential that we combat trafficking in persons with an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated crime strategy. By integrated, we mean that there should be a holistic approach to prevention, to the prosecution of those responsible and to assistance to their victims, particularly the most vulnerable, such as children, adolescents and women.

By comprehensive, we mean that we should consider trafficking in persons as a crime related to others such as drug trafficking and trafficking in migrants, which also require effective action in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, to which we encourage adherence.

By coordinated, we mean coordination among the national agencies concerned, which also involves strengthening bilateral, regional and global cooperation at the international level. In that regard, I would like to highlight Peru's initiative of legal protective zones, which seeks to establish a bloc of bilateral agreements that the Peruvian Foreign Ministry is already implementing with neighbouring countries. So far we have already signed agreements with Colombia, Bolivia and Ecuador, and negotiations are under way with Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay.

We welcome the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, and we trust that we can continue to rely on the assistance and steady support of the United Nations, especially the Office on Drugs and Crime. I would like to reaffirm Peru's energetic condemnation of human trafficking in conflict or any other circumstances, as well as of forced labour, especially for children, and to assure the

Council of my country's strong support in dealing with this serious problem.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): I would like to thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for convening today's ministerial-level open debate. We appreciate the insights that have been shared by the Secretary-General and the briefers.

Trafficking in persons represents a heart of darkness in our midst. The unholy nexus between terrorists and organized criminal groups in conflict situations has further aggravated that scenario. The Security Council, through its resolution 2331 (2016), unequivocally condemned all instances of trafficking in persons. In view of the request to the Secretary-General to make recommendations for implementing the resolution, we take this opportunity to consider five issues.

First, the Secretary-General may consider designating a high-level focal point for coordinating and monitoring the system-wide efforts of the United Nations against trafficking in persons. The principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies should continue to explore ways to further reinforce and complement one another's work, pursuant to their respective mandates. The lessons learned from the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, as well as its regional and national variants, could prove useful in charting a way forward. The offices of the relevant mandate holders, especially those on sexual violence in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, and migration, can make meaningful contributions.

Secondly, the victims of trafficking in persons and related crimes, including in conflict situations, must remain at the forefront of the United Nations counter-trafficking agenda. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons needs to be supported in a sustained and predictable manner. In view of the added vulnerabilities of refugees and displaced persons, the United Nations and its Member States should remain seized of efforts to address cross-border trafficking flows as part of mixed migratory movements. My delegation underscores the importance of addressing this issue adequately in the forthcoming global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and we look forward to the relevant thematic consultations.

Thirdly, despite significant gains in the legal sphere, the rate of prosecution and conviction of human traffickers around the world is still relatively low. United Nations support can be instrumental to national and international investigative mechanisms for gathering evidence of crimes in a timely and systematic manner. Such evidence can serve as an important building block in efforts to hold perpetrators accountable and provide justice and redress to the victims. The Security Council may consider having recourse to the range of tools at its disposal for fighting impunity for those responsible for trafficking in persons and other related crimes in conflict situations.

Fourthly, in most obvious cases, the proceeds from trafficking in persons, slavery and forced labour contribute directly to the financing of terrorism. The United Nations should continue its advocacy and support for compliance with the relevant international legal instruments and obligations, as well as Financial Action Task Force standards, in order to deal with any weak links in combating the financing of terrorism. We urge Member States to work on developing effective intelligence networks, at regional and international levels, in order to monitor, intercept and prosecute illicit financial flows connected to trafficking in persons and other related crimes.

Fifthly, the overarching priority of the United Nations, which is the prevention of conflict, should have a corollary effect on addressing the underlying vulnerability factors of trafficking in persons and other related crimes. Certain root causes of conflict also create an environment conducive to the rise of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as trafficking in persons and forced labour. The Security Council and the other relevant United Nations entities should remain engaged with those causes as part of their respective contributions to the goal and process of sustaining peace, drawing on one another's competencies.

As a country of origin, transit and destination, Bangladesh has positioned itself at the forefront of the global and regional counter-trafficking initiatives. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's personal commitment to combating this scourge has been translated into a series of legal, policy and administrative measures at the national level.

In conclusion, in response to the Secretary-General's call this morning, we reaffirm our commitment to joining hands with fellow Member States in further

strengthening the coordinated United Nations response to and action against trafficking in persons, slavery and forced labour.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Winid (Poland): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on the important topic of trafficking in persons in conflict situations, forced labour and slavery. We listened carefully to the briefers' compelling presentations, which were a reminder of the work we have ahead of us.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (EU), but I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

According to International Labour Organization (ILO) data, today almost 21 million people are victims of forced labour. Of those exploited by individuals or enterprises, 4.5 million are victims of forced sexual exploitation. And the most horrifying number is the approximately 5.5 million children around the world whose lives are damaged by trafficking and forced labour under the threat of violence. This deplorable and dangerous phenomenon, which exists on every continent, is increasing in scale, and it calls for global attention and action on the part of the international community.

Contemporary forms of slavery are linked to discrimination, social exclusion, gender inequality and poverty. Their implications for peace and security are especially visible in countries affected by conflict, and they can also undermine peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict situations.

Poland remains determined to fight human trafficking and forced labour and is involved in combating the problem at national, regional and international levels. The Polish criminal code defines and criminalizes slavery and human trafficking. At the regional level, Poland implements anti-trafficking policies, a subject that I believe was largely covered in the EU statement. In the framework of the United Nations, Poland was one of the initiators of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We have also ratified all the major ILO conventions related to forced labour, including the Forced Labour Convention of 1930. In December 2016 we contributed to the Security Council's open debate on trafficking in persons (see S/PV.7848), held under the Spanish presidency, and we co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), on the topic.

In Geneva last year, Poland supported the renewal by the Human Rights Council of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. We also support the work of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children. In that regard, we urge the international community to strengthen activities aimed at protecting children in conflict, and we highlight the role that national ombudspersons for children can play in that area.

Last but not least, we fully support target 8.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to ensure that immediate and effective measures are taken to eradicate forced labour and end modern slavery and human trafficking, including by ending child labour in all its forms by 2025.

In our view, when addressing modern forms of slavery, three issues are of the utmost importance: first, rising awareness and enhancing prevention; secondly, proper identification, investigation and prosecution of those crimes; and thirdly, protection and support for the victims. Those goals all require the enhanced attention and common efforts of the Government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, survivors, community and religious leaders. With better tailored strategies we will be able to reach at-risk populations, weaken international criminal networks and, ultimately, strengthen the rule of law and peace and security.

In closing, I wish to underline that it is our common responsibility to counter the dehumanizing effects of modern slavery and to ensure that the voices of the victims are heard. That is why I wish to once again thank the United Kingdom for the opportunity to speak on this particular and very important topic.

The President: I now give the floor to the Special Representative of INTERPOL to the United Nations.

Mr. Roux (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by thanking the United Kingdom for organizing this important meeting on such an essential, serious and far-reaching subject.

INTERPOL, the world's only police cooperation organization, is fully committed to assisting its 190 Member States in the fight against this widespread form of crime. Our support is always consistent with

article 3 of our Constitution, which prohibits any action in the political, racial, military or religious spheres.

The phenomenon of trafficking in human beings always has two components: a humanitarian and a criminal. That is the framework INTERPOL uses to orient its work and play an essential role through its partnership with United Nations bodies, such as the International Organization for Migration or the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to respond to operational and enforcement challenges — with a constant emphasis on its humanitarian aspect.

What services do we provide Member States?

First of all, there is our entire Vulnerable Communities Unit, which focuses on the trafficking of human beings, in all its forms, and forced labour. Our cooperative efforts run the gamut from prevention to protection, through a systematic partnership approach that is placed at the service of our member countries. Supporting that Lyon-based Unit in France are our seven regional offices, each of which hosts an officer specializing in the subject. In that way, INTERPOL can assist State police, during its tactical deployment, to dismantle criminal networks behind the trafficking of human beings, which are particularly active in areas of conflict, as we see today. By way of illustration, in 2017 INTERPOL's dedicated team, in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, will lead a project in Ukraine centred on the smuggling of migrants.

Secondly, the INTERPOL Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was further expanded in January to include more than 50 Member States. Its next meeting will be held on 14 and 16 March in Lisbon, and will be funded by the United States State Department. I invite all countries to regularly send your current expert there to be a member, or designate an expert, if they do not yet have one.

INTERPOL also deploys and implements a range of products and services to assist its member States in their fight against crime linked to trafficking in human beings. Among these are the INTERPOL notices, a tool for tracking criminals and suspects, locating missing persons or gathering information for an investigation; databases containing identifying information, or information on lost, falsified or stolen travel documents, fingerprints, DNA profiles or tools for analysing child abuse images; or even technology solutions to connect law enforcement agents to all these tools, including at border crossings via our secure network, I-24/7.

Finally, coordination operations, such as the recent border reinforcement operation launched by INTERPOL, named Adwenpa 2, focused on West Africa and set up in conjunction with UNODC, which recently led to the arrest of human traffickers and the seizure of drugs, stolen cars, cash in large quantities and counterfeit goods — clearly indicative of organized crime. Seven children between the ages of 11 and 16 were placed under protection, while those responsible for the trafficking were arrested. As that example shows, only an integrated approach can provide a useful and effective response to trafficking in human beings, trafficking in children and networks of slavery and forced labour — not to mention an increase, as was mentioned this morning, in the rate of arrests and prosecution.

This crime knows no borders; when States do not use all the tools at their disposal, such as those offered by INTERPOL, organized and unscrupulous criminal networks directly reap the benefits. Let us ensure that that does not happen.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for organizing this open debate.

Human trafficking is, unfortunately, an increasingly common feature of modern conflict. In that regard, I wish to reply to two of the main questions asked in the concept note drafted for the debate (S/2017/198, annex). First, how can the United Nations and its Member States better address vulnerable women and girls, children, and displaced persons? Second, how can we ensure justice for victims of slavery, human trafficking or forced labor during conflicts?

With regard to the first question, the Belgian national action plan against human trafficking utilizes different strategies to address vulnerable populations. For instance, it takes gender into account. It also teaches a "train the trainers" course for defence personnel who combat human trafficking. Relevant training is also provided to the personnel of the federal agency that welcomes asylum seekers. Additionally, a manual has been prepared to educate asylum seekers on the

conditions and rights of workers in Belgium so as to reduce the risk of abuse and exploitation.

On the second issue, the fight against impunity is a core component of our national action plan on women, peace, and security. One of the priorities of the plan is the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, including sexual violence. This is a topic that we also address in our commission on the status of women. Since human trafficking during conflicts is often for sexual exploitation, a section of the action plan details several concrete actions for those cases, including support for and cooperation with bilateral partners in order to embed attention for and expertise on the matter in national police and justice apparatuses, and the promotion of practical international legal cooperation tools.

With regard to international cooperation on criminal matters, I note the initiative mentioned by Argentina, Belgium, the Netherlands and Slovenia during the previous open debate on human trafficking (see S/PV.7847) — to promote the negotiation of a multilateral treaty for mutual legal assistance among States and extradition for domestic prosecution of the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Such a treaty would be a useful tool for facilitating better cooperation among States investigating and prosecuting those crimes, and would enable signatories to both comply with their international obligations and strengthen their national legal system.

Of course, the primary responsibility to prosecute such crimes lies with each State but, because of their transnational nature, this proves to be a challenging task. Indeed, the suspects, witnesses, evidence or materials attesting to acts of human trafficking must often be gathered from several States. As such, effective mutual legal assistance among States is essential for States that wish to investigate and prosecute those crimes to ensure justice for the victims.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Mr. President, allow me to express my congratulations to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

Modern-day slavery and human trafficking affect virtually every country and constitute one of the major threats to global peace and security as well as to our shared economic prosperity. Human trafficking affects women, children and men, subjecting people to cruel forced labour and sexual exploitation.

The Royal Government of Cambodia strongly condemns all instances of slavery and human trafficking. In line with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, my delegation supports a three-pronged approach focusing on prevention, protection and prosecution.

With respect to prevention, my delegation is of the view that effective prevention efforts must focus on curbing conflict while fully addressing its root causes. As exemplified by the way in which non-State armed groups operate, connections between armed conflict and human trafficking are multifaceted. Non-State armed groups openly advocate for the enslavement of women and children in the attainment of their misguided objectives. They actively promote slavery and human trafficking both as a means to finance their operations and as a method of warfare.

The primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations and the Security Council. In this context, the Council must play an active role in addressing conflict situations by promoting dialogue and peacefully negotiated solutions based on the United Nations Charter. It must follow up on the implementation of its resolutions, providing for clear and realistic peacekeeping mandates.

Moreover, the Security Council should closely collaborate with the General Assembly and United Nations agencies, including through increased consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Conflict prevention is the best policy to protect against human trafficking, and, where conflict is inevitable, the Security Council should actively engage in the de-escalation of hostilities, with a view to safeguarding vulnerable populations.

The protection of vulnerable persons, particularly displaced populations and refugees, is of central importance to the success of global efforts in combating human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery by non-State actors. In this light, the full implementation of the Palermo Protocols and the New York Declaration

for Refugees and Migrants plays a crucial role in comprehensively addressing human trafficking.

Moreover, in implementing protective measures, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can mobilize efforts to strengthen protection of the rights of the most vulnerable populations. In this regard, Cambodia would like to emphasize the importance of the full implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.2, which focuses on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking; SDG 8.7, which focuses on the eradication of forced labour, slavery and human trafficking; and SDG 16.2, which aims to end trafficking and all forms of violence against children.

The victims of human trafficking, particularly women and children, have a fundamental right to be protected in accordance with international law. In this context, it is necessary to ensure the provision of medical and psychological services to victims of sex trafficking and forced labour trafficking, while ensuring economic support to trafficking victims through training and job-placement programmes. It is also important to avoid stigmatization of these victims as they reintegrate into society.

In this context, my delegation supports the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and encourages States that are in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund.

This brings me to the issue of prosecution, which centrally reinforces preventive and protective efforts in the fight against human trafficking. The Security Council, in its resolution 2331 (2016), has recognized that human trafficking contributes to the spread of international organized crime, which exacerbates conflict and fosters insecurity and instability throughout the world. Moreover, Security Council resolution 2195 (2014) affirms that terrorists benefit from transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons.

As the prosecution of the perpetrators of such crimes is central to the eradication of human trafficking, my delegation notes the efforts made to establish an international mechanism focused on gathering evidence of atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist organizations. Cambodia welcomes all such initiatives that are carried out with due respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, including the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

In the light of the importance of international law-enforcement cooperation in the prosecution of human trafficking crimes, Cambodia will continue its longstanding partnership with regional partners, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, among others.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking, the global community must ensure the effective implementation of international obligations. Having ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto, my delegation believes that these efforts must be carried out in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with due regard for victims' rights and full respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The President: I would respectfully remind all Member States to complete their remarks within four minutes, especially in the light of the large number of speakers inscribed on the speakers' list.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of the United Kingdom for having convened this timely open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, forced labour and other similar practices.

We wish to begin by commending the Secretary-General for his November 2016 report on the implementation of measures to combat trafficking in persons (S/2016/949) and the recommendations contained therein.

In almost every conflict situation throughout the world, human trafficking thrives. It has been established that illicit trafficking in drugs, stolen antiques and small arms and light weapons often follows the same routes used by human traffickers. These activities threaten international peace and security, for instance by sustaining terrorism as well as criminal and armed groups. My delegation is mindful of the fact that one of the highest risks to displaced persons is the threat of being trafficked, especially refugees fleeing from conflict.

Trafficking operations often flourish in circumstances where institutions and law-enforcement capabilities are eroded and weakened by sustained conflict. This undermines the rule of law, which in turn contributes to the other forms of transnational organized crime, exacerbating conflict and insecurity. This is a vicious circle that requires from us united, concerted, sustained and cooperative efforts, whose ultimate objective is to address conflict, including its root causes. This requires that we address development challenges as well as external interventions, such as those we have recently witnessed in Libya, Iraq and Syria, which have led to the proliferation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Africa awaits with keen interest the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which will follow in the wake of the international community's efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on trafficking in persons. These are important steps forward in galvanizing our joint response to countering human trafficking, and we welcome them wholeheartedly.

South Africa also wishes to recognize and remind Member States of the role of the African Union, which has paid specific attention to the issue of trafficking in persons. In 1981, the African Union adopted the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, which prohibits slavery and human trafficking. The Charter is further complemented by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, which make specific provisions for the protection of women and children against slavery.

Furthermore, the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, adopted by the African Union in 2006, reaffirmed the provisions, provided for an international instrument on human trafficking and encouraged African States to adopt legislation and institutional measures to combat trafficking in human beings.

South Africa has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This Convention provided valuable guidance to South Africa in the creation of the Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2013, which is South Africa's first comprehensive legislation on human trafficking, which among other things seeks to implement South Africa's international obligations with regard to this challenge.

In 2016, the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants was launched internationally. South Africa was one of the first 13 countries identified to participate in this important initiative. On 22 September 2016, the South African Government and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime jointly launched this initiative, which strongly emphasized South Africa's firm commitment to countering trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that South Africa remains highly concerned and seized with the matter of human trafficking within our borders, but equally within our region, continent and elsewhere in the world. The particular impact that the trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict has on women and children, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based and sexual violence, is of particular concern. The fact that more people are presently displaced today than at any other time since the Second World War is a huge challenge, which exposes people worldwide to a range of human rights violations, including trafficking. Working within its mandate, the Security Council should take an assertive and decisive stance in their prevention so that even islands of terrorism, trafficking, armed groups can no longer be allowed to profit in any way from human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Ms. Kadare (Albania): First, I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency of the Council for convening this meeting on such a critical and urgent subject.

Albania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Human trafficking is a global problem, affecting both developed and developing countries, rich and poor societies. It is transnational, and its victims are everywhere. Therefore, it is our joint responsibility to put an end to this sordid crime and horrendous violation of human rights.

It is evident that the most vulnerable people are those caught in conflict: women, children, refugees. Trafficking in conflict zones is certainly not a new phenomenon. It is a well known and documented fact not only in the Middle East, but also in Africa, Asia and even Europe. During the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, sexual violence was systematically used to strike terror and humiliation into civilian populations. Yet, despite international awareness and outrage, we still have an incomplete understanding of human trafficking. Our capacities to prosecute the traffickers and assist the victims are inadequate, while the United Nations system's anti-trafficking efforts are fragmented and at times overlapping.

We have to admit that, despite our efforts, far from abating, human trafficking has flourished alarmingly. Combined with terrorism, it has led to new barbarisms, unprecedented in their scope and violence. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are using human trafficking and sexual violence, with full impunity, as a weapon of terror, but also as an important source of revenue, with low risk and extraordinary profit. We cannot allow this to continue. There is nothing more demoralizing and undermining for the values we stand for than the culture of impunity.

However, trafficking in situations of conflict is not limited to the context of terrorism. The different conflicts raging today are leading to the mass displacement of particularly vulnerable groups, which easily fall prey to exploitation and trafficking networks.

Resolution 2331 (2016), which Albania has co-sponsored, recognizes that human trafficking represents a threat to international peace and security. Furthermore, it identifies the complex nexus that exists between the trafficking in persons, transnational organized crime, conflict and terrorism. As the first action-oriented resolution of the Council to address trafficking in persons in conflict situations, it was an important step forward.

But awareness-raising and statements of condemnation are not enough. International coordinated action is urgently needed. We have at our disposal the necessary international legal framework — the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, including the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. It is within that framework that we need to strengthen our engagement and our cooperation at the regional and international levels. Intelligence sharing, financial investigations, anti-money-laundering laws and judicial cooperation — the whole arsenal that we have at our disposal should be deployed to combat human trafficking and dismantle terrorist networks. Civil society, the private sector and the media should be our major partners, especially with regard to the prevention and protection of victims.

Albania remains deeply committed to combating human trafficking. In line with the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, our national strategy in the fight against the trafficking of human beings and its action plan are victim-centred and gender-sensitive. At the regional level, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo signed last December a joint declaration expressing their commitment to ensuring the application of unified procedures for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that an integrated multilateral action is needed to combat this pervasive transnational crime. Furthermore, we encourage the Secretary-General to strengthen the synergies between United Nations agencies and to ensure that the United Nations system strategically coordinates its anti-trafficking efforts across its development, peace and security, and human rights pillars, as well as its humanitarian action. Albania stands ready to actively participate in discussions and activities to reinforce the response of the United Nations in eradicating this scourge.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and for bringing this important matter for deliberation before the Council.

Namibia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the African Union and by the statement that will be delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The topic under discussion is important in the general context of human rights, but more importantly, it is critical to the issue of governance as it relates to peace and security, as well as the underlying causes of human trafficking in conflict situations. The reality is that conflict situations generate human crises

violations, thereby benefiting the traffickers and their political and economic backers. There is little need for me to repeat the horrors that face those exposed to trafficking and modern day slavery, as well as other forms of victimization. Besides being denuded of their human dignity, trafficked and enslaved persons are too often isolated from any potential help they may receive through multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Namibia has been independent for 27 years this month. Hitherto, we have worked hard to ensure that any kind of trafficking is addressed and stopped in its tracks. Namibia is of the view that good governance, peacebuilding and conflict prevention are essential to the deterrence of crime, trafficking or slavery in any form. Namibia therefore subscribes to the undertaking of the African Union to silence the guns on the African continent by 2020. Good governance will require not only good-neighbourliness, but also regional cooperation. It is essential that in conflict and post-conflict situations, trust is restored in law enforcement and its ability to keep populations safe.

Trafficking in persons, organized crime and terrorism have been acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 70/291 and Security Council resolution 2331 (2016). Victims of trafficking, especially women and children, are vulnerable to prostitution, forced labour, servitude, forced marriages and even the use of sexual violence as a weapon of conflict. All of those, however, are attributes to the lack of good governance.

Another important aspect of good governance and the maintenance of peace and security is to ensure that our youth and women have access to economic advantages such as education and employment. It is here that we must recognize the essential role of the Sustainable Development Goals and their role in eradicating poverty, reducing economic stressors that can lead to youth unemployment and creating the kinds of discontent that can undermine peace and security. As we build economies, we must ensure development, peace and security. In the absence of such governance systems, human beings fall between the cracks and are more vulnerable to the evils of trafficking of both human beings and commodities.

Namibia has long recognized the importance of good governance and, since its independence, has worked hard to put in place governance and security systems. We have placed safeguards in our Constitution to ensure the independence of the judiciary and legislative bodies. In addition, more recently, we have been working to ensure legislation to protect victims of crime as well as of whistle-blowers. Moreover, Namibia's national development plan rests on four pillars. One of them is to promote good governance through effective institutions.

The Security Council has to remain steadfast in its mandate to uphold and ensure world peace and stability. Those who are trafficked or are vulnerable to the crime of trafficking, particularly in conflict situations, depend on the Council to act decisively on matters brought to its attention in that regard.

As we all know, trafficking in persons is not always a visible problem. Often, victims or potential victims have been threatened into remaining silent. Therefore, Namibia believes that using the guiding principles of the women and peace and security agenda can also enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council and the whole United Nations system in its coordinated efforts in tackling trafficking in persons, forced labour and modern slavery. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), for instance, has shown that women peacekeepers elicit positive responses from victims of sexual exploitation, rape, forced marriage and even trafficking. The United Nations systems should therefore work to ensure the inclusion of women peacekeepers and improve victim access to them.

Namibia has also been a strong proponent of female negotiators in conflict resolution. In that regard, the Council can play an essential role by insisting that delegations are gender-balanced. In that context, we commend Secretary-General Guterres for his strong and consistent appeal for Member States to include more women in United Nations missions.

Finally, I assure you, Mr. President, of Namibia's firm and continued support for addressing issues of peace and security as they relate to human trafficking, forced labour, slavery and other similar practices.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): First, I thank the United Kingdom for organizing today's debate.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Trafficking in persons is a gross violation of human rights and also one of the most serious and lucrative forms of transnational organized crime with huge human, social and economic implications. The problem is further exacerbated by conflicts and the ensuing large movements of refugees and migrants who often become easy targets of various forms of exploitation. It is therefore imperative to accelerate the global response to human trafficking through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and cross-border approach. In a globalized world, no country alone can disentangle the webs of traffickers. Better cooperation should be established among countries of origin, transit and destination in connection with information sharing, victim identification, support and reintegration.

In recent years Bulgaria has enhanced its law enforcement cooperation with countries in the European Union and other partners with regard to irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. Bulgarian law enforcement authorities are active partners in numerous EU-led and transnational operations aimed at curbing trafficking and smuggling and bringing perpetrators to justice. As an external border of the European Union, Bulgaria pays special attention to the nexus between conflict and trafficking in persons and actively supports United Nations-led efforts to end political and security crises in the region, which are conducive to migration flows.

The early identification of victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows is one of the main priorities of the Bulgarian national commission for combatting trafficking in persons, which has established strong partnerships with the relevant United Nations bodies and other organizations aimed at ensuring the effective management of migration processes and respect for the human rights of all persons. The Bulgarian Government invests in building capacities to identify potential and actual victims of trafficking among migrants and asylum seekers and to provide adequate protection, in particular to children on the move.

Bulgaria is committed to the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, known as the Palermo Protocols, which represent a solid foundation of international law in this area. Furthermore, Bulgaria welcomed the first-ever Security Council resolution on the trafficking of persons in conflict situations — resolution 2331 (2016), adopted last December.

Bulgaria is one of the countries in Europe with the most comprehensive institutional framework to combat trafficking in persons. Bulgaria was one of the pioneers in Europe to adopt specialized anti-trafficking legislation, in 2003. Bulgaria has penalized trafficking in line with the highest international legal standards and has gone one step further by introducing more severe punishment for crimes involving children as victims. A national commission for combatting trafficking in persons is operating at the central level, and there are nine local anti-trafficking commissions specialized in preventing trafficking among vulnerable communities. The new national anti-trafficking strategy for the period from 2017 to 2021 has a special focus on early detection and prevention.

Trafficking is a gendered phenomenon, and the majority of the victims are women and girls. In Bulgaria, as elsewhere in the world, the majority of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation are women and girls. In view of that, the national anti-trafficking commission of Bulgaria provides specialized assistance to women victims of trafficking in three Government-funded shelters.

Given the particular vulnerability of children to trafficking, annual prevention campaigns are organized in schools in partnership with local authorities, academia, civil society and a network of youth volunteers. A specialized coordination mechanism for referrals and assistance for unaccompanied children and child victims of trafficking has also been established. In the coming months, the Bulgarian authorities will also open a new specialized facility to provide protection, assistance and reintegration of child victims of trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Ms. Jashi (Georgia): I express our gratitude to the United Kingdom presidency for convening today's important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and the briefers for their contributions to this debate.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will add several remarks in my national capacity.

Human trafficking is a global problem affecting the most vulnerable: women, children, internally displaced persons, refugees and minorities. This gruesome

violation of human rights translates to various other forms of transnational organized crime. As our colleagues have mentioned, terrorist groups often use human trafficking as a weapon of terror and a source of revenue. And increased movements of refugees and migrants have significantly increased the threat of human trafficking. We therefore welcome the increased focus of the Security Council on this matter, with the adoption of its most recent resolution 2331 (2016).

The United Nations and its agencies have a special role to play at all levels, especially in addressing the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees in emergency and post-emergency settings. The engagement of the Security Council on the matter will further promote efforts to that end, alongside the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1).

Combating human trafficking has been a core priority of the Georgian Government for over a decade. The country has witnessed growing high appraisal of its counter-trafficking measures by the global reporting mechanisms. The latest 2016 *Global Slavery Index*, the 2016 United States State Department *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* and the second evaluation report of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings all document the visible progress made by the country. The *Global Slavery Index* ranks Georgia in second place in terms of the actions taken, based on its gross domestic product, and as the seventeenth country among the 167 States taking the most effective counter-trafficking measures.

While bearing witness to that progress, allow me to summarize four success factors and lessons learned with regard to what has worked in my country. First, sustainable political commitment and a continuously evolving legislative framework has been a key to success. An adequate legislative framework has been put in place, and human trafficking is explicitly criminalized in Georgia. Most recently, Georgia consolidated its vision in its national action plan structured around the so-called 4Ps, namely, prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships around human trafficking.

Secondly, a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach has been critical. The inter-agency coordination council led by the Ministry of Justice and including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, non-governmental organizations and the State fund for assistance for victims has played a critical role.

Thirdly, focus should be placed on proactive investigations. Georgia has almost doubled proactive investigations over the past 4 years, thanks to the special mobile teams and a special anti-trafficking unit under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Lastly, raising public awareness on trafficking has been critical as an essential prevention measure. Georgia will therefore intensify its public awareness-raising efforts through its new information strategy, which targets the most vulnerable groups.

The illegal occupation of the Georgian regions of Tskhinvali, South Ossetia and Abkhazia by the Russian Federation remains the main limitation preventing the Government of Georgia from fully exercising its counter-trafficking measures. There are no mechanisms to effectively identify, investigate and prosecute alleged trafficking-in-persons cases in the occupied territories, while the occupying Power continues to place undue restrictions on the local population, particularly ethnic Georgians.

Finally, let me reiterate that Georgia remains committed to increasing international cooperation aimed at developing effective cross-border control measures. We remain committed to stronger international efforts for preventing and combating human trafficking and modern slavery.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom presidency for choosing the topic "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations" for this debate. This topic is most timely, as today our world is experiencing an unprecedented crisis of conflicts, marked by complexity and the massive flows of people that they have generated, reaching a record level of 59.5 million people. That has significantly increased the risk of human trafficking. There is a need, therefore, to reflect together so as to seek ways and means of strengthening action on the part of the international community, not only to combat the scourge, but also, first and foremost, to promptly resolve conflicts and build lasting peace.

Trafficking in persons is one of the most heinous crimes possible and one of the phenomena most

profoundly undermining the human person, as it strikes against the most precious part of the human being, namely, his or her dignity and human value. Nothing could be more humiliating than to be a victim of that scourge. The link between conflicts and trafficking in persons is clear, as indicated by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in her latest report to the Human Rights Council (A/71/303). The phenomenon develops not only during a human or natural disaster, but also as a direct consequence of humanitarian crises, although the loss of life garners greater attention.

The reason is simple. Conflicts create situations bringing vulnerability, both for affected persons through violations of their rights, as well as in terms of the loss of public institutions and essential services. Traffickers use those highly vulnerable contexts to perpetrate their despicable acts with impunity, thereby transforming those fragile places into countries of origin and transit for trafficking.

However, conflict situations are not the only causes of trafficking deserving our attention. Democracy gaps, political instability, economic, social and institutional crises, civil unrest, systematic human rights violations, corruption, impunity, the absence of the rule of law, non-compliance with election results, and the imprisonment of dissidents and political leaders all constitute a fertile breeding ground in which human trafficking can plant its roots.

The Security Council identified the issue of human trafficking as a priority. In December 2015 (see S/PV.7585), the international community heard for the first time the moving testimony and cry of alarm expressed by Ms. Nadia Murad, a survivor of exploitation and sexual slavery at the hands of Da'esh. That stirring testimony was followed by the Council's adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, which demonstrated the Council's commitment to preventing, criminalizing, investigating and prosecuting those involved in human trafficking, leading towards the reversal of that harmful trend.

Nevertheless, the Security Council must bolster its action to combat the scourge on several levels, notably through, first, improved coordination of the international community's response to crisis. That requires taking into account, from the outset, all aspects of the conflict, in particular collective, humane and responsible management of displacements. Secondly, improved political will is necessary in order to resolve conflicts and build lasting peace, taking into account the specific needs of the affected persons and victims of trafficking, with particular emphasis on socioeconomic development. Thirdly, special focus is necessary on conflict-prevention tools for the strengthening of democracy, the rule of law, justice, public services and national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Fourthly, strengthened international cooperation is necessary so as to address the cross-border nature of the human trafficking scourge.

Mindful of the need to combat that heinous crime, Morocco has ratified all relevant international treaties, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Furthermore, Morocco has updated its legislative framework to prevent human trafficking and combat human rights violations, notably through the adoption, in June 2016, of Law 27-14 on the fight against trafficking in human beings. That law includes, inter alia, broad definitions of trafficking in human beings and the concepts of exploitation and the victim.

The law also includes sentencing and preventive measures to protect victims and convict the perpetrators, with strengthened sentencing against the perpetrators of crimes against children, pregnant women and people in fragile situations. It also contains provisions on institutional measures to combat the phenomenon, with the creation of an advisory commission reporting to the Head of Government.

The President: I wish to point out to all Member States that we are really pleased to see how many people want to participate in this important debate. But in order to be fair to the 20 speakers that are still on the list, I will use my gavel if speakers go beyond four minutes. I would ask that those assisting Permanent Representatives tap her or him on the shoulder if she or he risks going over the time limit. Delegations should feel free to circulate full remarks to all members of the Security Council afterwards.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we wish to offer our best wishes to the United Kingdom delegation for successfully guiding the work of the Security

Council this month. We also thank Ukraine for the skill with which it led the work of the Council in February. We also extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his briefing, as well as to Messrs. Yuri Fedotov and Kevin Hyland and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their respective briefings.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that it is necessary to point out that crimes of human trafficking, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, modern slavery and forced labour are, from any standpoint, despicable practices that we firmly condemn, in particular because they have proliferated and spread in ongoing situations of armed conflict throughout the world, especially those promoted by terrorist groups and other violent non-State actors operating in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and Boko Haram. The terrorist actions carried out by these organizations have caused a human tragedy, whose main victims have unfortunately been the most vulnerable — women, girls, boys — who have been caught up in wars that they did not start and have become commodities for these criminal trafficking networks.

This barbarity is a serious obstacle to the long-sought peace for which we have fought so hard in our respective national and regional environments. That is why the United Nations is the best forum to work together to prevent and combat the spread of this type of crime by addressing its root causes. We urge all international actors to take effective action to eradicate this scourge. We cannot let human life to be used as spoils of war by these criminals. This is a truth that cannot be ignored, in particular by all those who incite and promote armed intervention and conflicts. Those who are responsible should, at all levels, must be held accountable before the law.

Despite the fact that this terrible crime and its related practices affect all States to some degree, the way it is discussed in the Security Council — namely, in the context of armed conflict — requires us to recognize that one of the reasons that there has been a worsening of this crime in recent years has been the destruction of State capacities in the countries concerned as a result of interventionism by those countries that foster the overthrow of Governments, destroy the social, political and economic fabric and create conditions for the expansion of international terrorism, which today threatens international peace and security, while violating the human rights of civilian populations affected by those countries' criminal actions. That is the case of Iraq, Libya, Syria and the countries of the Sahel, to mention but a few, where today their leaders and peoples are fighting diligently to restore peace and stability following armed foreign interventions, which has led to major trauma and human suffering.

We must not forget the fact that this is not a new phenomenon, nor is it exclusive to terrorist groups. The great Powers of the world have been the cause of and main protagonists in promoting war throughout contemporary history. They are also the principal manufacturers and marketers of weapons. They are the ones who need limitless natural resources, which they seek in all circumstances, in order to meet their unbridled appetite for consumption. They are the ones who are primarily responsible for the excesses of war, causing the massive flows of refugees, sexual exploitation against civilians, forced labour and modern slavery. The sponsors of these tragedies will be called on to answer for their acts before the law and will be judged by history.

Venezuela will never relent in its demands on the various actors of the international community to put an end to the supply of financial and logistical support and weapons to terrorist groups and other violent non-State actors that promote the crime of trafficking in persons, enslaving men and women and using them as active participants in armed conflicts, exploiting them in numerous ways and exacerbating the cycle of suffering and death. We have had enough with two-faced morality and double standards in assessing and combating crimes associated with trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We must condemn human trafficking and modern slavery, but we must also recognize that this firm condemnation goes hand in hand with concrete actions that involve putting an end to activities of those who sponsor conflicts clandestinely or openly for their own political and economic ends.

In this context, we must tackle the root causes of these conflicts, as they foster the vulnerability that makes people victims of trafficking. We must establish effective accountability mechanisms and restore the economic and social fabric of countries in post-conflict situations. We must reinforce States' role in promoting stability, eradicating poverty, economic development and social inclusion, which in the end are the true structuring factors for preventing traffickers who incite human suffering out of petty interests from continuing

to thrive in the midst of armed conflict and even in peaceful situations.

The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is a point of reference and a step forward in outlining the international commitments to eliminating this scourge. Further, the review of the Plan of Action, which will be held in 2017, means that we must renew and increase the will of all States to fully comply with the inalienable duty to combat this crime, expand preventive mechanisms, ensure accountability, and gather data and evidence.

In addition, we welcome the initiative that this complex phenomenon is being discussed in the Security Council, and in particular the recent adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) last December, but we believe that it is crucial to recognize that the leading role for taking up this issue belongs to the General Assembly, in which all States actively participate, taking into account the multidimensional and cross-cutting nature of the scourge. Discussion should be focused primarily on the prevention and eradication of trafficking in persons, bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples.

The President: I would again remind speakers that there is a four-minute time limit for their statements. If they turn their microphone in the correct way, they will see the flashing light. The set-up is not very fair for the speakers, as the microphones are not well designed to help them see the time. But if the microphone is turned in the right way, then the speaker will be able to see the flashing light.

I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Galbavý (Slovakia): I wish to thank the United Kingdom delegation for convening today's open debate on modern slavery, human trafficking and conflict. The problem is global, affecting poor and rich countries alike. Today's debate is also timely as it is takes place in conjunction with the ongoing sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Women and girls are the most targeted group in terms of human trafficking and exploitation.

While aligning ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union delivered earlier, I would like to briefly make the following points on the subject in my national capacity.

Human trafficking and modern slavery have become one of the most profitable and fastest growing areas of activities of transnational organized crime, holding millions of people in inhuman conditions, violating their dignity, personal freedom and human rights. Poverty is at the root of the problem, as is lack of awareness of both victims and the general public. Emergencies, such as massive movements of people caused by terrorism, war, poverty and oppression, create an enabling environment where vulnerable groups of people become easy targets and victims.

Human trafficking takes many different forms and targets men, women, girls and boys alike. As has been mentioned, according to the International Labour Organization, there are 21 million people around the world trapped in some form of modern slavery, including trafficking, debt bondage and child labour. New forms and ways of this criminal activity frequently emerge.

We need a mix of strong policies at the national level and concerted action at the international level. States must not only criminalize slavery and punish perpetrators but also must make every effort to prevent it and offer protection and remedy to victims. We must also do more to address root causes of radicalism, violent extremism and international terrorism.

Slovakia is committed to doing its share in the fight against modern slavery. We have ratified all major international treaties and implemented the relevant European Union legislation. We have strengthened our criminal code and our code of criminal procedure, in order, in particular, to increase protection of child victims. We have established an institute for national anti-trafficking coordination at the State Secretary level of the Ministry of the Interior and adopted the National Programme to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the years 2015-2018, with the aim of effectively combating human trafficking through coordinated activities of all entities involved at the national level.

In conclusion, once again, allow me to thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. My delegation will continue to engage in a constructive manner in our collective efforts to effectively mitigate the scourge of modern-day slavery.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Ms. Leoteau (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to commend and thank

the Secretary-General for his briefing, and thank Mr. Fedotov, Mr. Hyland and Ms. Elman for their important contributions.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949) has revealed that traffickers mainly take advantage of women, young people and boys and girls, in particular those traveling alone, making that group account for 79 per cent of the victims of a terrible crime that affects all countries. Armed conflicts have encouraged the trafficking in persons within the context of large migrant flows, leading to serious consequences such as early child marriage. Panama supports the eradication of child marriage in all contexts, not only in conflict situations. Some 60 per cent of the victims of trafficking are foreigners from the country with which they identify and the majority are migrants for sexual exploitation, forced labour and modern-day slavery.

One of the major challenges in prosecuting and condemning the crime of trafficking is the collection of data and proof based on which we can share good practices in an effort to overcome the growing and worrisome situation to which we can all relate when crossing borders. On 15 December 2000, Panama signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — and its protocols. Because it understands its vulnerabilities as a transit route and a country of destination for migrants, Panama now has a National Commission against Trafficking in Persons, an inter-institutional structure that provides various types of care required by victims.

Panama believes that the Security Council could request that States Members of the United Nations comply with the Convention and proceed to the next stage. We have come to a standstill on the regulatory framework. We must engage in more vigorous prosecution of traffickers and ensure that judicial systems in each country enforce the corresponding sentences. To that end, we must increase resource allocations and secure evidence, which is even more difficult in conflict situations and when dealing with terrorist groups and their actions.

We should also strengthen the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, in particular for women and children, established by the General Assembly; not to revictimize or punish the people who have endured that crime, but rather to support and help them, guarantee their security and accept them in the countries to which they have been taken. We must insist on, promote and monitor the United Nations zero-tolerance policy towards sexual offenses, as a clear sign of the serious commitment and political will of all its constituent bodies and staff as well as its Member States.

At several open debates, we suggested that joint efforts that can be carried out by, for example, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should be strengthened, through the use of tools, such as the Universal Periodic Review, from which the implementation of the legal framework for the prevention, treatment and elimination of trafficking in persons in armed conflict should be monitored. We would like to make special mention of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, whose regional headquarters for Latin America and the Caribbean is in Panama. It works to support States in the difficult tasks of preventing and punishing trafficking in persons at the global level. Likewise, we would like to make special mention of non-governmental organizations whose team members risk their lives, rescuing, helping and giving a new opportunity to victims of trafficking, in particular those working in conflict and post-conflict zones.

It is important for us to continue to review the prevention and prosecution of the crime of trafficking, as recommended by States within the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and including the theme in our national voluntary reviews.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Mashkoor (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening today's debate. We wish the United Kingdom every success in its presidency of the Security Council this month.

Trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and fuels transnational organized crime, which exacerbates insecurity. Iraq became party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2009 because it is a central pillar in the fight against international crimes. To comply with its obligations under the Convention, Iraq adopted Law No. 28 of 2012 on combating trafficking in persons, with a view to establishing mechanisms to assist victims of

trafficking, put an end to the crime and punish such a reprehensible act. In addition, the Iraqi Constitution contains articles that prohibit forced labour, slavery and trafficking in women and children.

Trafficking in persons, slavery and forced labour are practices that help to finance terrorist groups. Da'esh criminal gangs have kidnapped thousands of Iraqi citizens, in particular Yazidi women and children and have exposed them to human trafficking and slavery. Such victims have been subjected to the worse forms of inhumane treatment. Iraq therefore requires support to liberate victims and restore their dignity. Iraq calls upon member States to implement the relevant resolutions, including resolutions 2195 (2014) and 2242 (2015). In those two resolutions, the Council indicated that sexual violence is a part of the strategic and ideological objectives advocated by terrorist groups.

In order to implement those two resolutions, Iraq started work with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and those efforts led to the signing of a joint statement with Ms. Zainab Bangura on 23 September 2016 at United Nations Headquarters. That agreement is the start of joint efforts between Iraq and the United Nations to address head-on such violations and barbaric acts perpetrated by Da'esh and other parties. Ms. Bangura, along with a group of legal experts, visited Iraq from 25 February to 3 March. During that visit, she spoke with the President of the Governing Council, religious leaders and the presidents of various institutions to explore the various legal options. Iraq calls upon all countries to honour their obligations and strengthen efforts to uncover trafficking in persons operations and put an end to them.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country regrets that the Security Council has been unable to denounce the terrorist bombing in Damascus on Saturday. The Council must assume its responsibilities and condemn the two terrorist attacks that took place in Damascus today. The Council's work is hampered by several of its Western members. It continues to convey the message that there are two types of terrorism — moderate and extremist.

Today's meeting is an important one for my country, Syria. Today's debate should be a genuine opportunity for us to highlight trafficking in persons as one of the most dangerous threats to humankind. It is linked to the spread of terrorism, which exploits the most vulnerable in communities, in particular women and children who are victimized and fall into the trap of slavery, sexual exploitation, forced labour and trafficking in human organs.

Transnational organized criminal networks continue to exploit hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees who have left their homes. That is supported by a number of Governments, particularly the Government of Turkey, which continues to exploit internally displaced persons and refugees as tools for political blackmail and pressure. Before the current nefarious terrorist war, my country, Syria, had achieved much progress in the field of combating human trafficking. We became a party to many international protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. We also promulgated our own laws, which adhere to international standards.

However, the rights of hundreds of thousands of Syrians are being violated in areas under the control of armed terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. The Governments of some Member States continue to fund, arm and support those groups. They overlook the fact that those groups adhere to a takfiri Wahhabi ideology and they have a religious doctrine that calls for killing others. I would like to point to the recent report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (S/2016/361), which has documented the crimes of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in the fields of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons. But the recommendations of the report have not been implemented.

Syrians in the areas under the control of armed terrorist groups are enslaved. Women are being abducted and are forced to marry terrorists, especially foreign terrorist fighters. Those terrorist groups have issued fatwas that allow for the sexual exploitation of women. Children are abducted and recruited before the eyes of their parents, and they become terrorists and suicide bombers. Things are not better in the refugee camps. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians live in those camps without safety and security, and the neighbouring countries that have opened those camps have not lived up to their responsibility. They are not

providing a safe haven for those citizens of Syria who have escaped from the armed terrorist groups and who now are victims of human-trafficking networks.

United Nations reports, particularly the reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, have pointed out that there is a continued rise in the activities of transnational organized criminals within those camps involving human trafficking, rape, the forced marriages of women and minors and organ-trafficking networks that exploit children.

Ending the phenomenon of human trafficking, one of the most heinous crimes against humanity, requires a collective international stance and commitment to dealing with the root causes of the phenomenon through the implementation of Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2331 (2016), and the provision of an enabling environment, both socially and economically, that would lead to the achievement of sustainable development for all peoples without exception.

The international community, particularly the United Nations, should shoulder its ethical and legal responsibility to find a solution for Syria by taking serious steps to implement the Security Council resolutions on terrorism. The Governments of some countries must end all support provided to armed terrorist groups. They should close their borders to mercenaries and terrorists, and we should seek an inter-Syrian solution led by Syrians without foreign intervention. We should also put an end to the unilateral coercive economic measures that have been imposed by a number of States against my country, Syria. We should create human, economic, social conditions that would enable Syrians to return to their country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council for this month. I thank you for holding this important open debate. I also thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Mr. Kevin Hyland, United Kingdom Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner; and the observer of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia for their valuable briefings this morning.

Trafficking in persons is a reality and an international phenomenon that challenges the international will and human values. It is a grave violation of human rights. It is a complex threat that targets vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, in addition to persons with disabilities and the elderly. Trafficking in persons is a serious problem often caused by conflicts, which create waves of displaced persons. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees are forced to leave their homes and homelands to seek a decent living. The phenomenon is compounded by the fact that terrorist groups benefit from it, as they exploit, recruit and brainwash youth to get them to conduct terrorist operations. The proceeds of trafficking in persons are used in those operations.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the United Nations Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons constitutes the legal basis for the international community to combat human trafficking. However, the international community has been unable to end the crises and conflicts. Moreover, the policies adopted have failed to end the violations of the fundamental rights of individuals and peoples and failed to combat impunity, which has led to continued trafficking in persons. Crises and conflicts create an enabling environment for trafficking in persons and for the perpetuation of that phenomenon, which violates the rights of individuals and populations.

Qatar is committed to international law and seeks to enhance cooperation in that field. Hence, we have supported the United Nations Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons since its adoption. We have taken legal steps, and we have promulgated a national law on trafficking in persons that criminalizes it in all its forms. We have taken strict legal action to prevent and criminalize money-laundering as one of the tools used in human trafficking.

Qatar is one of the major contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking. We seek to enhance international cooperation in the field of combating crime, especially as manifested in human trafficking. We hosted the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The adoption of the Doha Declaration on integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda so as to address the

social and economic challenges and promote the rule of law at the national and international levels was a step towards dealing with this crime.

We are one of the major supporters of UNODC, as it is the main United Nations points of reference in efforts to combat crime. We believe in the rule of law at the national and international levels. We believe in the role that the rule of law plays in combating mass atrocities and violations of human rights in countries suffering from conflict. We have therefore worked with partners in international groups to combat impunity. We understand the high human price that civilians pay in Syria as they are forced to migrate and fall victims to traffickers. Hence, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/248, on the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. That is an important step towards combating human trafficking as an international crime.

We believe in the need to preserve human dignity, and we honour our international legal obligations. Hence, together with our partners, we participate in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. Moreover, my country has approved the request by the General Assembly that I should serve as a co-facilitator with Greece for the evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which will be held in October 2017.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the international community's efforts to combat this phenomenon requires concerted action, the most important part of which is to resolve conflicts and crises and to combat impunity. We will continue to support all the efforts of the Security Council aimed at ending human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Almahmoud (United Arab Emirates): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I would like to congratulate the United Kingdom on its presidency of the Council this month and its championing of efforts to combat human trafficking around the world. We hope that today's debate will contribute to a greater understanding of the role of conflict and instability in exacerbating the problem of modern slavery and offer an opportunity to exchange experiences in combating human trafficking at the national level.

This is a front-line concern in our own region, where war and displacement are rendering a significant portion of the population defenceless. Da'esh and other extremist and terrorist groups have subjugated innocent people on a horrific scale as forced combatants or as sources of revenue through their labour. But it is not just monetary gains that such groups are reaping. The exploitation of the vulnerable, particularly women, is fundamentally tied to extremist ideologies that pose an existential threat to our region and our way of life.

In order to tackle this global phenomenon, we have to start with what is possible within our national borders and build on that effort with others in a network of coalitions. As a champion of gender equality, the United Arab Emirates is particularly concerned about the disproportionate impact that this crime has on women and girls. We take that abuse of human rights very seriously and are working aggressively to combat human trafficking through law-enforcement mechanisms and dedicated institutions throughout our Government. Without addressing the shortcomings and gaps in our own legislative and normative frameworks, we could not tackle this problem head on, so in 2006 we passed a federal law — the first anti-trafficking law in the region — banning the practice of human trafficking and protecting its victims by implementing strict enforcement provisions and penalties for convicted traffickers.

However, we have discovered through experience that legal frameworks are not enough to confront this problem at its core. So in 2007, the United Arab Emirates established a national committee to combat human trafficking, implementing a multi-pronged strategy that aims to prevent the occurrence of this crime, prosecute and punish perpetrators, protect survivors and promote local, regional, and international cooperation. We also strengthened our law-enforcement ability by creating specialized units in police departments across the country for fighting trafficking. To build capacity and awareness throughout law enforcement, we instituted training sessions and workshops, including a five-month intensive course on human trafficking, the first of its kind in the Arab world.

Individuals subject to this heinous crime must be protected with shelter and counselling and must be recognized as victims, not as part of the criminal gangs

that have exploited them. So we have beefed up our support for victims, whether women, men or children, by opening shelters across the Emirates that offer medical, psychological and social assistance, and by establishing a private fund to support victims' recovery and resettlement.

Given our challenging regional context, our national and multilateral defences must evolve as quickly as the traffickers' criminal offences do. That is why it is critical to ensure regional cooperation on anti-trafficking alongside our international engagement. Looking ahead, I would like to propose three recommendations for combating human trafficking that could be applied at the international level, and specifically with regard to the crises in our region.

The first is on prevention. While we must tackle trafficking within our own borders, we must also cooperate with the countries where trafficking originates. This means working with Governments to ensure legitimate migration channels, as well as focusing on preventing circumstances that open the door for traffickers to exploit individuals, by promoting the rule of law in order to protect citizens and by offering them economic opportunities. The prevention that results from achieving sustainable and inclusive development for all is essential to tackling the root causes of this issue.

Secondly, the agencies combating modern slavery are facing challenges as numerous as they are complex. Because of that, multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, must take the lead in improving international cooperation between the private and public sectors and between Governments and international institutions. When we adopt the forthcoming global compact on safe, regular, and orderly migration, it must include provisions that address modern slavery.

Lastly, we urge the Security Council to enhance its response to human trafficking, which is a problem linked to violent extremism and terrorism. We support the Council's full use of the instruments at its disposal to combat the wrath of the groups that are exploiting the vulnerable and fomenting conflict. It is only when the community of nations truly works together that we can holistically confront and eradicate this grave threat to international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. McHugh (Ireland): I thank you for convening today's important debate, Mr. President. Ireland was proud to be a sponsor of resolution 2331 (2016), on trafficking in persons in conflict, when it was adopted in December, and today's debate is a crucial opportunity to continue that momentum. This is an issue that affects more than 21 million people worldwide, more than 5 million of them women and children, and it is therefore incumbent on us to do everything we can to address it.

I align myself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (EU). The EU has also taken a leading role in various policy and programme initiatives to prevent and combat human trafficking, and Ireland will continue to support those endeavours. I will make three points in my national capacity.

The first is that human trafficking is a reality and we must respond to it. Sensitization training and capacity-building should be at the core of our response to cases of human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery. Security officials must know the signs to look for and the support to ask for. First responders must be sensitized in order to ensure that victims, especially women and girls, receive the medical and psychosocial care that they urgently need. Law-enforcement and legal officials must be aware of the rights and responsibilities involved in such cases. Civil-society organizations must be empowered to act as watchdogs throughout. An effective response to human trafficking also requires that partnerships be formed both within and across international and regional bodies. We are pleased to see the growing partnership between INTERPOL and the United Nations as one example of progress in that area. The work of United Nations regional offices in building partnerships with subregional organizations will also play a key role going forward.

Secondly, human trafficking will continue if we do not prioritize prevention. Ireland believes that impunity acts as a driver of human trafficking. We need to tackle that head-on and see accountability as a key to prevention. National systems must be equipped to uphold international and customary standards of justice in cases related to human trafficking and modern slavery. Moreover, we strongly believe that we need to focus more on the conditions that make people vulnerable to human traffickers, leading to their becoming trapped in cycles of forced labour or modern slavery. Poverty and economic hardship are major factors in that

regard. That is why implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial. Human trafficking is explicitly addressed in four of the Sustainable Development Goals, although implementation of all 17 Goals will ultimately be necessary if we are to tackle the root causes of the phenomenon. A stronger focus on sustaining peace, particularly in support given to conflict-prevention initiatives at the national, regional and international level, will also directly help to stem the tide of human trafficking.

Thirdly and lastly, we must take a gendered approach in responding to human trafficking. Human trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery force people into circumstances that no human being should have to endure. The effects on women and girls can be particularly harrowing. The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1) commits all States to ensuring that our responses to large movements of refugees and migrants mainstream a gender perspective. This does not simply entail instituting extra security and response measures; it also means ensuring women's participation in policies and programmes aimed at combating and preventing human trafficking.

This issue is a priority for Ireland. Our commitments are set out in our national action plan to prevent and combat human trafficking, now in its second phase. It was developed in consultation with national and international partners, including civil society, and sets out a clear, collaborative programme for advancing the fight against trafficking and enhancing the protection of victims. Raising public awareness is key to preventing and combating human trafficking. Ireland also provides funding to various international and multilateral funds involved in combating the issue. Preventing human trafficking is an enormous challenge that requires the concerted efforts of all involved, and only through collaboration at the international, regional, bilateral and national levels will it be advanced.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): I join the previous speakers in commending your initiative, Sir, to convene this important debate on human trafficking in conflict situations.

Human trafficking is an issue not only of human rights but of peace and security, as well. Given its close connection to corruption, organized crime and terrorism, the devastating impact of human trafficking on peace and security cannot be overly emphasized. While conflicts generate an environment conducive to human trafficking, human trafficking itself is also a factor that exacerbates conflicts. That is further compounded by the fact that vulnerable groups such as women, children, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons are the most susceptible to human trafficking in conflict situations. Indeed, violent extremist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram, not only employ sexual violence as a weapon of war, but also strategically use human trafficking to recruit terrorist fighters, including child soldiers, and finance war and terror. In short, those groups exploit the trafficking of vulnerable populations as a means to strengthen and expand their power and influence. Furthermore, human trafficking is inherently transnational in nature, occurring in every corner of the world and affecting developing and developed countries alike.

Taking all of those factors into consideration, I would like to highlight the following three points in our discussions on the ways to combat human trafficking in conflict situations.

First, all Member States, especially those directly or indirectly engaged in or affected by conflicts, must work together to fight against human trafficking in conflict situations. Given its transnational nature, human trafficking cannot be effectively addressed by conflict-affected countries alone. Moreover, in coping with that crime, due diligence should be exercised to uphold the principles enshrined in all the relevant human rights conventions and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2331 (2016).

Secondly, a coordinated approach is essential. Those international agencies addressing the criminal aspect of human trafficking, such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and those dealing with the human rights and humanitarian issues, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, should work closely together through coordinated responses and strategies so as to strengthen synergies.

Thirdly, with a view to finding effective and sustainable solutions to human trafficking in conflict situations, maximum efforts should be undertaken to protect and support victims and hold perpetrators accountable. Campaigns to raise public awareness of the serious consequences of human trafficking should also be stepped up through the concerted efforts of the international community. For its part, in recent years, the Republic of Korea has taken concrete measures to strengthen its institutional basis to combat human trafficking both domestically and internationally. We not only codified human trafficking as a serious crime into our national legal system in 2013, but also ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in 2015.

At the same time, as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) this year, Korea, I believe, has a role to play in coping with that issue in the context of sustaining peace. The PBC, in fact, has been deliberating on the importance of regional approaches and collective efforts in addressing such cross-border challenges, especially in places like the Sahel region in Africa. Furthermore, women and youth, the most vulnerable groups to human trafficking, are also high on the agenda of the PBC. This year, the PBC will further deliberate on the empowerment of those groups so that they can better contribute to the peacebuilding process, and I hope that such discussions will add greater momentum to addressing human trafficking in the broader context of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I simply cannot speak about human trafficking in the Chamber today without recalling my compatriots who are suffering from that heinous crime, albeit in a somewhat different context. Even as I speak, North Koreans who have escaped their country in search of freedom are exposed to the danger of falling victims to human trafficking. Indeed, there is no peace and security without human rights, and without peace and security there are no human rights. That is all the more reason why the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to eradicating global human trafficking in conflict situations and other circumstances. I can assure you, Sir, of our commitment to playing our due role in achieving that collective goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mrs. Chartsuwan (Thailand): Let me begin by commending the Government of the United Kingdom for its role in ensuring that the Security Council will consider how to further apply itself and how to join in system-wide efforts to combat this abhorrent crime.

The issue of trafficking in persons, modern slavery and forced labour is high on Thailand's national agenda, as successive Governments have recognized that human trafficking erodes human security and poses a serious threat to both Thailand and the international community. Domestically, Thailand has exerted immense efforts to strengthen domestic legislation to close legal loopholes and worked fiercely to ensure effective prosecution. In order to extend our protection and prevention efforts, we have also engaged the private sector and civil society in increasing transparency in the supply chains of businesses, particularly in the fishing sector.

At the international level, Thailand has placed great emphasis on bilateral, regional and international cooperation to eradicate human trafficking, forced labour and the transnational organized criminal networks that prey on the vulnerable. We were therefore encouraged to see the Council adopt resolution 2331 (2016) three months ago, and today we are again encouraged to hear the Council discuss how it can support international efforts to combat trafficking in persons more effectively.

From Thailand's standpoint, first, peacekeeping and all other personnel deployed in conflict and post-conflict areas must be properly trained to identify the victims of and those vulnerable to trafficking. They must be have an understanding of the threats and security challenges that arise from transnational organized criminal networks. They must know the immediate, practical and legal protections that are available. They must be able to respond to the needs of victims and to those vulnerable groups.

Secondly, data and trends on trafficking in persons in conflict situations must be collected, monitored and assessed to inform policy and concerted action against armed groups and criminal networks. Such data has to be evaluated within the broader trends of trafficking in persons globally. Only then will we be ably to truly see a comprehensive picture of the problem and address it in a comprehensive and effective manner. It also has to form a key part of the consideration of actions that the Council takes on conflict and post-conflict situations.

Thirdly, we also have to take a serious look at strengthening inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system on the issue of trafficking in persons. That can be done through connecting the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and regional organizations, or through more focused briefings at the Council that engages agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime or the International Organization for Migration. Whatever option is chosen, now is the time to pursue it.

To be effective in its anti-trafficking efforts, the international community needs to take a common, consistent and coordinated stance on the issue with the engagement of the entire United Nations system and, moreover, the crucial support of the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to participate in this very important debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. First, I express my gratitude and congratulations to the delegation of the United Kingdom for having convened this high-level debate today, which allows us to deepen our understanding of a serious phenomenon and develop a joint analysis of its causes and the increasingly sophisticated methods of terrorists and traffickers, as well as to identify appropriate solutions to sustainably solve the problem. We underscore the judiciousness of the concept note (S/2017/198, annex), which clearly lays out the problem, clarifies what is at stake and asks a number of key questions in a heuristic approach.

I thank the Secretary-General and the Director General of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as Mr. Kevin Hyland and Ms. Ilwad Elman, for their penetrating perspectives and analyses.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Trafficking in persons is a transnational crime that today spares no country. Sadly, we witness all too frequently a tragedy affecting thousands of persons, particularly women and children. In addition to suffering the horrors of armed conflict, they are often the victims of trafficking and sexual violence, crimes that comprise an extremely perverse affront to human dignity and that, in certain circumstances, may well be flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international conventions on human rights and transnational organized crime.

The issue of human trafficking has been a main priorityof the United Nations over the past few decades. The 2000 Palermo Protocol and the 2017 United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons serve as the cornerstones and benchmark documents for all States Members of the Organization. At the same time, in recent years we have seen a shift in the forms of human trafficking, particularly during and after conflict.

In various regions of the world affected by conflict, sexual violence is used to destroy as a tactic of war or terrorism and is a key element of the ideology and activities of extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Da'esh and Al-Shabaab. Those terrorist groups openly advocate human trafficking as part of their military strategy or as a source of funding. As a result, the Security Council must pay particular attention to the links between such phenomena as human trafficking, sexual violence in conflict situations and the activities of terrorist groups.

Djibouti recognizes that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, represent the core international framework for combating human trafficking. The spirit of the Convention must be embedded in the national legislation of Member States and duly implemented. In that regard, we attach great importance to the assistance provided by relevant bodies to Member States, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, particularly the guidance provided on legislation and implementation. We hope that they will further encourage progress on the issue and we support their crucial work.

The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, highlighted the following in her report:

> "It is estimated that 10 to 30 per cent of children in fighting forces are female. Girls who are forcibly recruited or abducted into military service typically face forced domestic labour and sexual violence and exploitation such as forced marriage and/or sexual slavery." (*A/71/303, para. 33*)

Additionally, the report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1) highlighted the fact that in the past two years sexual violence has been increasingly linked to the strategic, ideological and financial objectives of extremist and terrorist groups.

In the third report of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) by States affected by foreign terrorist fighters (S/2015/975, annex), its Executive Directorate encouraged Member States to develop effective regional strategies to deal with cross-border issues and to cooperate closely with border communities to foster knowledge sharing.

(*spoke in English*)

Indeed, if we are to effectively tackle this scourge, we need to communicate more effectively, share intelligence and mobilize resources. That requires investment, vigilance and cooperation.

Over 90,000 men, women and children from neighbouring countries transit through Djibouti en route to Yemen and other locations in the Middle East. In 2015, during the sixth meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Consultative Process on Migration, held in Djibouti, States members of IGAD decided to redouble their efforts to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. My Government recently enacted a new anti-trafficking law on the fight against trafficking in persons and illicit smuggling of migrants, repealing Djibouti's law of 2007.

In conclusion, Djibouti is appalled by the commodification and dehumanization of human beings. It reiterates its commitment and its willingness to cooperate with the international community in the global effort aimed at combating this increasingly complex and sophisticated scheme developed by a vast network of facilitators and criminals.

The President: I just wish to remind everybody we have 10 speakers remaining on the list. To be fair to everybody, I would ask speakers to keep within the four-minute time frame. I will otherwise have to use the gavel.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mrs. Natividad (Philippines): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, with a focus on forced labour, slavery and other similar practices.

About a year ago, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, addressed the Council and said that

> "trafficking in persons in conflict and crisis situations is not a mere possibility or isolated incident; rather, it happens on a regular basis as a consequence of conflict" (*S/PV.7704, p. 6*).

It must therefore be seen and addressed as a systemic outcome of conflict. Conflict-related trafficking is, however, rarely detected, and even less often addressed. That observation is shared by our Philippine inter-agency council against trafficking, which acknowledges the existence of trafficking in persons incidents in conflict areas in the Philippines, but faces the difficulty of tracking those incidents.

The Philippines has adopted a one-country team and multistakeholder approach to trafficking in persons that consolidates the mandates, efforts, resources and interests of the duty-bearers and stakeholders to come up with a robust response. That has resulted in promoting awareness and the mainstreaming of interventions, down to the grass-roots level. Realizing the increased vulnerability of populations in conflict areas, the Government has activated a structure called the gender-based violence cluster, composed mainly of law enforcers and social welfare service providers who specialize in gender issues, and civil society representatives. The cluster is tasked to address the needs of women and children in conflict situations, especially in mitigating vulnerabilities to sexual violence and trafficking. The cluster develops and implements programmes for access to protective information, psychosocial and trauma-informed care, protective custody and access to education and economic opportunities.

The issue of child soldiers, especially young men and boys, is also of serious concern to the Philippine Government. The Government considers the recruitment and use of children as soldiers as a grave case of violation of child rights. In that regard, our efforts are focused on preventing their recruitment, investigating allegations of recruitment, holding the perpetrators accountable

and training front-line officers in appropriate methods to assist children rescued from armed groups.

To address the problem of human trafficking as a means to finance the activities of terrorists, armed groups and transnational organized crime networks, it is important to examine trafficking corridors and the business flow of trafficking. That approach has enabled the Philippines to strategically locate victims and traffickers in the entire process, especially at critical points of intervention where victims are the most visible and can be rescued. It also allows the identification of critical points in the business flow to deal the strongest blow to the operations of trafficking syndicates and to expose and develop strategies to arrest new means employed by traffickers.

The Philippine Government has made it a priority to provide our migrant workers with protection from human trafficking and exploitation. That protection is provided through national laws, international arrangements, cooperation with destination countries and initiatives in multilateral forums. Recently, we have worked with the United States, the International Organization for Migration and other partners on the Migrants in Countries in Crisis initiative to improve responses to assist migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster. The guidelines, principles and practices leverage the competencies and strengths of various stakeholders to save lives, increase protection and decrease the vulnerabilities of migrants, including from trafficking. The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration also provides us with an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation to allow migrants to move across borders safely and prevent them from falling into the arms of traffickers.

The very nature of human trafficking requires cross-border cooperation. Member States need to strengthen international coordination on information-sharing, law enforcement, border control and judicial systems, and to learn important lessons to enhance their own national action plans to more effectively combat the problem. Criminal networks, armed groups and terrorists groups must not be allowed to further thrive in situations of instability and chaos, to prey on the fear, hardship and misery of others caught in conflict and post-conflict situations, or to profit from activities such as forced labour, slavery and other forms of exploitation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mrs. Boura (Greece): I too would like to commend and to congratulate the United Kingdom on its initiative in organizing this open debate.

Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add the following.

Human trafficking and modern slavery are indeed global crimes that violate human rights, affect and devastate communities and present a threat to international peace and security. In conflict situations, they may amount to war crimes, or crimes against humanity.

In situations of armed conflict and instability, criminal networks and traffickers target the most vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, displaced persons and refugees. Armed groups systematically engage in the sexual enslavement and trading of women and girls, and treat civilian populations as a resource to be exploited and commodities to be trafficked and traded as part of the economy of war.

The Secretary-General's 2016 report (S/2016/949) identifies the complex nexus between trafficking in persons, organized crime, corruption, armed conflict and terrorism. In spite of the important legislative framework adopted by the international community in order to combat this global problem in recent decades, human trafficking and exploitation in many forms, including forced labour and recruitment to armed groups, remain an issue of grave concern and a law enforcement challenge.

Taking into account the unprecedented levels of human displacement and the increased vulnerability of potential victims in refugee and migratory flows, the prevention of human trafficking must now be a priority. We are firmly convinced that the international community should, at the same time, focus on comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns, establishing a proactive and inclusive identification regime for victims and strengthening law enforcement.

In our efforts to combat human trafficking, we must crack down on the enormous profits generated by traffickers, follow financial trails and use all available investigative tools to prosecute the perpetrators. The implementation of the legal framework to combat human trafficking would be more meaningful if accompanied by efforts to identify, protect, assist and rehabilitate victims. We need to work closely together to promote

multilateral cooperation, enhance early identification procedures and establish robust referral mechanisms so that victims can access protection services.

Through close cooperation with leading international organizations and United Nations institutions, especially the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, specialized training for law enforcement and front-line professionals is now more necessary than ever. Echoing the European Union statement, we reiterate the importance of strengthening multilateral partnerships and of engaging, in line with resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), more women and young people in actions against human trafficking.

Greece, a first entry point for hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, has established the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a national identification and referral mechanism for victims of trafficking. Of course, sustaining peace and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals will eventually address a number of root causes that lead to trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery.

We are confident that this debate and the momentum created in the Security Council will contribute to our common efforts. Greece is ready to support and participate actively in all relevant initiatives to strengthen our response to this global challenge.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Hau Do Suan (Myanmar): First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate. My delegation extends its best wishes for the success of the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council.

Trafficking in persons has become a dire threat to millions of vulnerable and fragile people across the world. The problem of trafficking is woven into many other challenges: conflict, terrorism, organized crime, extreme poverty, sexual violence against women and young girls and migrant smuggling. In view of the seriousness of the problem, the international community has committed itself to ending human trafficking through the implementation of Goals 5,8 and 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As part of national efforts to combat trafficking in persons, Myanmar is a State party to various international legal instruments including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; and the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries.

Myanmar enacted a law against trafficking in persons in September 2005. We are now reviewing the law to bring it in line with the changing circumstances. Myanmar thanks the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for being a strong partner in the fight against transnational crimes in close collaboration with INTERPOL. Myanmar has been tackling this issue through a comprehensive framework that includes domestic legislation — a five-year national plan of action. We have recently launched the third five-year national plan of action to combat trafficking in persons. Yearly work programmes are developed to implement the plan in the five key areas — namely, policy and cooperation, prevention, prosecution, protection and capacity-building.

Myanmar is also actively taking part in regional efforts to combat human trafficking. We have been working closely with our regional partners on issues through regional mechanisms such as the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.

The cessation of conflict and peacebuilding are some of the most effective ways to solve the problem of human trafficking. The democratic Government of Myanmar has made national reconciliation and peace one of the country's most important priorities and is fully committed to achieving that objective. It has advanced the peace process by establishing a regular timetable for negotiation through the Union Peace Conference and opening the dialogue to all ethnic armed groups. The first session of the Peace Conference, also known as the 21st-Century Panglong Conference, was held from 31 August to 3 September 2016. The second session is expected to convene soon, upon the conclusion of political discussions at the national level. Recent clashes in Northern Shan and Kachin States have highlighted the importance of achieving peace

and have even strengthened our firm resolve to move ahead with the peace process to end the conflict.

We have also taken appropriate measures to prevent potential human trafficking, slavery and labour exploitation in conflict areas. As part of those measures, information sharing campaigns, workshops, and awareness-raising seminars about people smuggling and trafficking in persons are being held. Awareness-raising pamphlets, published in local languages, have been distributed. All of those activities were carried out in collaboration with Government and United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs and religious groups.

With the rapid inflow of foreign investments into Myanmar, we have been taking measures to avoid labour exploitation and abusive labour practices. In order to better promote and protect the labour rights of our workers, the Government introduced legislation, policies and regulations, in conformity with the provisions of relevant International Labour Organization conventions.

Myanmar will continue to make every effort to combat the menace of human trafficking in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, combining law enforcement, human rights and social development perspectives, as reaffirmed by the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Let us all continue our collaborative efforts and cooperative action to address the issue of human trafficking in order to make our world a safer and more secure place for all.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Roet (Israel): Allow me to begin by reading the words of Zinab, a 31-year-old Yazidi woman:

> "We were in Kocho village when they came ... The girls ages 10 to 30 were taken to Mosul ... I was taken to Tal Afar and kept in a cage ... I escaped ... but was caught again ... I was kept in a house as a slave for a month ... then another girl and I got out through a small window ... They handed me right back to Da'esh ... The man who bought me that time beat me badly and raped me whenever he wanted. He made me wash his clothes and clean his house ... [Then I escaped again, but another] guy beat me, raped me and kept me in a locked room ... Half the things that were done to me, I cannot say out loud ... I didn't think I could survive much more."

It may be hard to believe, or perhaps we would prefer not to believe, that 45 million people find themselves in some form of modern slavery. According to the Walk Free Foundation *Global Slavery Index*, these are 45 million people deprived of their identity, taken away from their families, traded and transferred from one hand to another as if they were pieces of property instead of human beings — imagine, 45 million people deprived of freedom. This would amount to the entire population of Ukraine, to 70 per cent of the population of France, 4.5 times the population of Bolivia, 5.5 times the population of my country and more than 13 times the population of Uruguay. It is hard to grasp this number, let alone to comprehend the tragedy and suffering. But it is impossible, even inhuman, to remain indifferent while listening to the words of people like Zinab.

In recent years, human trafficking, forced labour and slavery have become ever more dire and painful with each passing day. For our region, the Middle East, this debate could not be more relevant and timely. Vulnerable refugees fleeing the horrors of war in Syria frequently end up in another horrifying reality — that of slavery and exploitation. Armed groups, terrorists and powerful transnational criminal networks are taking advantage of the helplessness of refugees, including young children, and forcing them into labour, crime and prostitution while falsely promising them a better future in Europe. Terrorist groups like Da'esh regularly coerce girls into sex slaves and force boys as young as eight years old to carry out terrorist acts such as suicide bombing.

For many around the world, such horrors might sound like a distant reality. For us in Israel, we sadly witness such atrocities in our own backyard. Together with a surge in international terror, cases of unimaginable forced labour, slavery and untold cruelty are flooding the Middle East and flowing to other regions of the world.

The signing of Palermo Protocol and the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) were steps in the right direction, but signing declarations and adopting resolutions is not enough. From our own experience, we know that the key to saving lives lies in the protection of those that are most vulnerable, enacting and enforcing laws and encouraging rehabilitation.In Israel in 2010, we were finally able to put an end to the trafficking

of women for prostitution. Israel was able to achieve this outcome by applying a system for prevention, prosecution and rehabilitation. Israel strongly believes that by combining these three decisive actions, we will be able to work towards the eradication of slavery and human trafficking.

To conclude, in less than a month Jews around the world will sit around their Passover table and recall the story of how the ancient Israelites escaped bondage in ancient Egypt and achieved freedom in the land of Israel. Freedom and the abolishment of slavery for all humankind are indeed fundamentally enshrined in our culture. In fact, we are commanded to retell this story every year and to recall how we were treated when we were slaves — and we have been doing so for thousands of years. With the bitter memories of slavery forming our collective memories, Israel is more committed than ever to cooperating with the Council to fight against terror, slavery, forced labour, sexual slavery and other similar practices. It is high time that we all work together to finally remove this age-old scourge from the annals of humankind.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr Yaakob (Malaysia): Malaysia joins previous speakers in thanking the United Kingdom for convening this meeting. The focus on the issue of human trafficking in armed conflict, which highlights a disturbing trend that warrants strengthening international action, is indeed commendable and timely.

Allow me also to thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Mr. Yuri Fedotov for their briefings and steadfast commitment to addressing the issue of human trafficking. I also wish to thank Mr. Kevin Hyland and Ms. Ilwad Elman for their harrowing and powerful testimonies. Their courage and fortitude in the face of unspeakable horrors should compel us to act and demand to be matched by the strongest resolve on the part of the international community so as to ensure that the detestable treatment that they have witnessed and others have experienced is not repeated.

Trafficking in persons is absolutely unacceptable in any context. Human trafficking entails the extrajudicial judgment that certain groups of people — be it on the basis of ethnicity, faith, gender, economic status, age or other random criteria — are inferior and can be used as a means to an end. Human traffickers treat people without dignity and negate the respect inherent to all humankind. Such twisted concepts and beliefs are especially pernicious in situations of armed conflict, where the vulnerability of civilian communities makes them prime targets for such horrendous acts.

We are currently witnessing a nightmare scenario in which non-State armed groups are actively engaging in human trafficking activities to fulfil their distorted visions of the world. Da'esh and its ilk have shown that they are capable of immense cruelty through the prevailing use of sexual violence, enslavement and the trade in women and girls for recruitment and financial purposes. In that regard, the practices of groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram in perpetrating sexual violence, including through the trafficking of women and children, demand heightened and greater attention and responses from the Council. We wish to briefly highlight three aspects that we believe will make a real difference in tackling the scourge.

First, as with all transnational crimes, strengthening operations and coordination among Member States, as well as regional and international organizations, is imperative. In that regard, we call on Member States that have yet to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocol — which prohibit trafficking in armed conflict, identify perpetrators and hold them accountable — to make information and evidence of acts of trafficking in persons and sexual violence in conflict available to the Council and channeled to the relevant Sanctions committee, including the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. We support integrating a focus on trafficking in persons and the use of sexual violence in armed conflict into the work of the Monitoring team of the 1267 (1999) Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, where there are clear linkages to terrorist activities.

At the same time, the crucial outreach and advocacy roles of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict must be better leveraged. The securing of commitments and action plans for parties to the conflict so as to end and prevent violations and abuses associated with trafficking in persons, including sexual violence and the recruitment and use of children, should continue to be pursued.

We call for the Council's continued engagement with the special envoys, including through the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the various sanctions committees.

I would like to emphasize the need for victims and survivors of trafficking and sexual violence to be supported in returning to a secure and stable life. Women and children subjected to any violation or abuse, including trafficking and sexual violence, at the hands of Da'esh and similar groups, should be considered as victims and given access to funding and as the principal foundation for our considered action to do so as soon as possible. Given the multifaceted dimensions of trafficking in persons, including where it is associated with sexual violence and the funding of terrorist activities, it is crucial that the international community mobilize complementary legal means, where available, to investigate, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other bodies, as well as bilateral partners, in providing technical support to Member States to build law enforcement capacities.

Through our own experience as a country of destination and transit, we have learned that cooperation and coordination with neighbouring countries and the international community are essential to our common efforts to combat this ugly scourge. Malaysia, as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is happy that the Association has made a unified commitment to combatting and preventing trafficking in persons through the implementation of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and its related plan of action, established in November 2015. We also appreciate the strong support for such regional-level efforts on the part of of the East Asia Summit partners, as reflected in the Summit declaration adopted last September.

In maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must better utilize its available tools to monitor trends in humanitarian assistance. In that respect, community and religious leaders are pivotal in ensuring the reintegration and rehabiliation of survivors and in eliminating the stigma that can be associated with the ordeal that they have been through. In that regard, we support continued partnership with civil society to enable survivors and communities to heal and renew.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's enduring resolve to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons and our equally strong commitment to continuing to work with the international community until we bring an end to those crimes against humanity.

The President: I wish to remind the few speakers we have remaining to try to keep their statements within the four-minite limit in order to be fair to those yet to speak. The light will flash when four minutes are up.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Bosah (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation thanks the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this open debate on "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices". We commend you, Mr. President, for the comprehensive concept note (S/2017/198, annex) provided to guide our discussions. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General and other briefers for sharing their perspectives on this important subject.

Nigeria also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Trafficking in persons has remained a global phenomenon affecting the most vulnerable people caught in the web of conflicts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. Terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others, have used human trafficking, forced labour and other similar practices as weapons of terror and important sources of revenue.

The sexual exploitation of women and girls, including sexual enslavement, forced marriage and forced prostitution are among the grave factors underpinning human trafficking during and in the wake of conflicts. Such exploitation is used by extremist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), Boko Haram and their affiliates to generate revenue, as well as reward and retain terrorist fighters.

Today, it is estimated that more than 60 million women, children and men are fleeing conflicts, escaping wars or seeking a better life. Yet, as they make their journey, many are caught in the web of human trafficking and being coerced into slavery and other forms of exploitation. Having realized the deleterious effects of this phenomenon, it is gratifying to note that we are all united in our conviction to overcome

the evil of trafficking in persons, through effective international cooperation.

Nigeria recognizes the urgent need for the international community to fight trafficking and to take the necessary steps to block financial flows between and among terrorist organizations. It is pertinent that Member States of the United Nations undertake investigations and prosecute cases of human trafficking perpetuated by their nationals. Nigeria considers it imperative that all perpetrators should be brought to justice through concerted international response necessary for resolving the challenge of human trafficking. Having established that most victims of trafficking are women and girls, it is only appropriate for our responses to include special attention to their rights. Furthermore, Member States must also adopt gender-sensitive and rights-based migration policies in this regard.

The fight against human trafficking has remained an issue of national priority for the Government of Nigeria. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, which is the principal institution charged with the responsibility of leading this fight, has provided an effective and comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, persecution and punishment of crimes of human trafficking. The Agency, with the active collaboration of international partners, has made very significant contributions to the fight against trafficking in persons.

We appreciate the efforts of humanitarian actors that are undertaking advocacy campaigns to publicize the risks of trafficking and the tactics employed to coerce and traffic victims and what such victims could do to protect themselves. In addition to taking preventive measures, States must engage in the protection of victims. The Palermo Protocol specifically requires States to protect the human rights of victims and to provide measures for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking.

Nigeria recognizes the various efforts made at the international level to combat human trafficking. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) condemned the sale of, or trade in, persons seized by terrorist organizations and other groups for purposes of sexual slavery and exploitation and forced labour. As encapsulated in the concept note, human trafficking and modern slavery are global crimes, with a large number of displaced persons as victims. Considering the multidimensional nature of these phenomena, we believe that these crimes must be addressed both collectively and comprehensively, including by taking a close look at their root causes and drivers. We must also adopt a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach, while recognizing the role and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and effectively protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals subjected to these crimes.

We must aim to enhance coherence and build alliances to confront these issues head-on. Equally critical is the need for greater responsibility sharing to provide protection to those in need. To achieve this objective, we must implement the strategy laid out in the Global Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking. With solid partnerships and a clear approach, we can ensure the criminals are brought to justice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Gone (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We have every faith in you and will provide you with support during your term.

My delegation is very pleased to participate in this high-level open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, which gives us the opportunity to discuss this important issue. Allow me also to congratulate the speakers this morning on the contributions they made to our debate.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is of particular concern. The images and testimony provided by the media in conflict zones show to what extent this phenomenon is not only a serious violation of human rights, but also a real threat to international peace and security. Last Thursday, 9 March, at the United Nations, at a high-level event on the fight against impunity for atrocities, we heard a moving account by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. We also heard at the event the heart-rending account by a young Yazidi woman who had been held hostage by Islamic State jihadists and we heard her plea for the Security Council to take up the fate of her people in Iraq. Testimonies, such as that of this young Iraqi, could also be that of the people in the Lake Chad basin, of many countries in conflict

and of many refugee camps in Africa and around the world. Since this morning, many speakers have recalled such practices, which are well known and varied. They include sexual slavery, the use of victims for labour, forced domestic work and forced recruitment into armed groups.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of which my country is a member and which is affected by this phenomenon, has since 2002 regularly adopted several action plans, the most recent of which covers the period 2016-2020. These plans propose, among other things, the adoption of national legislation penalizing trafficking in persons, measures to protect and assist victims, and public awareness campaigns. In this context, the strategic and operational support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to ECOWAS has made a significant contribution to the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons in West Africa.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations for its multiform support through UNODC for the implementation of the ECOWAS action plan. In line with this regional strategy, Côte d'Ivoire ratified, on 25 October 2012, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We also adopted law 2010-272 on the prohibition of trafficking in persons and the worst forms of child labour and the law of September 2016 on combating trafficking in persons.

Given the unprecedented scale of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings in times of conflict, the mobilization of the entire international community is more necessary than ever. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption last December of resolution 2331 (2016) . In particular, my country encourages all Member States to encourage the implementation of existing national and international legal instruments to combat this scourge, in particular by bringing the perpetrators of these crimes before the competent criminal courts.

The existence of international organized crime networks mean that States, civil society organizations and the United Nations system must coordinate their actions. As has been pointed out throughout this debate, trafficking in persons in times of conflict most often flourishes in an environment that has been weakened by a decline in the rule of law. Support for strong State institutions appears to be an essential in this regard. The strengthening of the capacity of civilians fighting this phenomenon should also be encouraged.

While the correlation between hotbeds of conflict and the resurgence of trafficking in persons seems undeniable, we also must bear in mind such situations as poverty and low levels of education. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire believes, therefore, that the fight against trafficking in persons in times of conflict and in times of peace must take a comprehensive approach. The appropriate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in fragile countries is an opportunity. It is also important to support States affected through the creation of databases to better identify the phenomenon of trafficking in persons in order to improve victim assistance.

At this moment, when the Commission on the Status of Women is holding its sixty-first session, and against the backdrop of the empowerment of women, my delegation hopes that today's debate will help to give hope to all victims of trafficking in human beings in situations of conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the presidency for convening this open ministerial debate and for submitting a concept note on the topic (S/2017/198, annex).

We are also grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres and the other briefers for their statements.

The exploitation of people through trafficking, including forced labour, slavery and recruitment by armed groups, is a serious abuse of human rights, while certain acts associated with trafficking persons in the context of armed conflict may amount to war crimes. Azerbaijan strongly condemns all acts of trafficking in persons and is combatting such acts and other similar practices. We share the concern over the scale and number of challenges, which have recently deteriorated due to increased violence, terrorist activities and humanitarian crises.

The international legal framework for combatting human trafficking is based on the rules operating within the relevant branches of international law that

ensure protection in all situations, including armed conflict. Success in fighting criminal activities during conflicts, including human trafficking and similar practices, requires first and foremost a strong commitment to binding obligations and standards. It is critically important to ensure the full and effective implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular those relating to conflict prevention and resolution.

We note with concern the nexus between trafficking in persons, terrorism and transnational organized crime. Particular consideration must also be given to armed conflicts that are aggravated by foreign military occupation and external political, military, financial and other support to separatist regimes established in occupied territories and organized criminal networks operating in such areas. Efforts to bring unlawful situations to an end and to disrupt and dismantle the networks involved must be a priority.

Among the issues requiring attention in the context of human trafficking, forced labour, modern slavery, organ removal and other similar practices is that of civilians, including women and children, taken hostage or reported missing in connection with armed conflict. Azerbaijan continues its consistent efforts in that regard, including through the relevant biennial resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, of which my country is a main sponsor.

The best deterrent is undoubtedly ensuring a speedy end to impunity for conflict-related violations and abuses of human rights through all available means. When national authorities fail to investigate, prosecute and convict the perpetrators, the international community should play a more proactive role. It is important that the Security Council, Member States, regional organizations, mediators and envoys in mediation, peace and preventive diplomacy processes ensure that peace and justice work together effectively.

It is also essential to emphasize the role of the relevant humanitarian mandates within the United Nations system in addressing situations of armed conflict and the important of international law-enforcement cooperation, including with respect to the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Kayobosi (Uganda): At the outset, I bring warm greetings from our Minister for Foreign Affairs, The Honourable Sam Kutesa, and convey his apologies for not being able to come and participate personally in this important debate due to other State duties. He conveys his greatest appreciation to the United Kingdom presidency for the invitation extended to him to participate in this important debate on a topic that is so critical to Uganda.

My delegation greatly appreciates the briefings delivered earlier by the Secretary-General and other briefers.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is perhaps one of the most challenging evils that the world is currently confronted with, and the organization of this open debate by the delegation of the United Kingdom, under its presidency of the Security Council, is very timely in providing an opportunity to Member States to share insights into how the root causes of this scourge and the challenges being confronted in countering it can be effectively addressed.

Uganda happens to be in a region that has experienced a lot of conflict, which has exacerbated the problem of human trafficking in the region. The conflicts in our region have made the majority of our people, particularly women and children, more vulnerable to organized criminal networks that engage in human trafficking to destination countries for mainly forced and cheap labour, sexual exploitation and, in some cases, slavery.

A number of reports have recently revealed some of the most horrific experiences of women and girl children who have been trafficked in some of the destination countries, where they end up being sold as objects. These trafficked persons, particularly women and girls, have endured untold torture and sexual abuse at the hands of their tormentors. Uganda's delegation deeply deplores this phenomenon, which is unacceptable, and calls for the concerted efforts of the international community to decisively confront it.

As rightly pointed out in the concept note before us (S/2017/198, annex), the link between trafficking in persons, organized crime and terrorism is increasing in magnitude and scope, as clearly demonstrated in the case of Libya, where the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons continue to provide both direct and indirect funding to armed and terrorist groups. This is a clear example of how conflict situations, whose root

causes are multifaceted, have engendered that linkage and made it thrive to unimaginable proportions, leading to a further exacerbation of human suffering.

Trafficking in persons in conflict is also closely intertwined with other transnational organized crimes, such as money-laundering and drug trafficking. The financial resources that accrue from human trafficking enable money-laundering to thrive and in turn largely contribute to funding terrorist activities. And the cycle continues. It is therefore evident that this requires a holistic approach that addresses the interconnectedness of these vices to our societies.

It is imperative that Member States, with the support of the international community, develop comprehensive mechanisms that promote a coordinated approach to addressing the root causes of this phenomenon. Needless to point out, some of the root causes of such conflict situations that enable human trafficking to thrive include, but are not limited to, widespread inequalities in the global economic environment, poverty, foreign occupation in some situations, discrimination based on religion, gender and race, and other vices. Addressing such root causes and mitigating the enormous adverse effects associated with this evil phenomenon requires a holistic approach with the full support of the Security Council and the entire United Nations system.

It is in that context that my delegation welcomes this open debate and extends its full support to measures to be developed to address this problem. Working together through the United Nations system would help to send a strong message to the perpetrators of these crimes and to undermine and curtail the capabilities of their networks to execute their criminal activities.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): At the outset, let me, like other speakers, thank the British presidency for this debate on an important and complex topic.

In view the importance that Aruba, one of the four countries in our kingdom, attaches to the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery, let me acknowledge the presence in my delegation of Minister Hooyboer-Winklaar, Minister for Education and Family Policy in the Government of Aruba and Head of the Delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, we support the statement made by the representative of Italy, also in the context of our split term in the Security Council in 2017 and 2018.

There is an obvious need for the Council to address the issue of human trafficking in conflict, as it clearly undermines international peace and security. I shall focus on three issues in that regard: prevention, protection and prosecution. Let me start with prevention.

National responsibility and international cooperation are key to an effective preventive approach to human trafficking. This requires at least three things. First of all, we need more in-depth analysis and greater information-sharing to understand how criminal networks operate, because terrorist groups are increasingly engaged in human trafficking and the smuggling of people. To this end, the Netherlands promotes international cooperation between financial intelligence units.

Secondly, we need to step up our joint effort to combat the current criminal networks involved in human trafficking, for example in the area of border security. As co-Chair, together with Morocco, of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, the Netherlands is committed to placing this topic high on the agenda because greater border security also addresses cross-border human trafficking in conflict areas.

Thirdly, we believe that we should increase our vigilance. In order to strengthen the implementation of our anti-trafficking legislation and policy, in 2000 the Netherlands appointed an independent national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings with that objective especially in mind.

That brings me to my second issue, that of protection during conflict. Here, one specific area of focus should be the protection against human traffickers of vulnerable groups among refugees and internally displaced persons, especially women and children. One way to do so is by increasing the resilience of displaced persons and host communities alike. Also from that perspective, the Netherlands supports education, economic development and employment for displaced persons and host communities in the wider Syrian region and the Horn of Africa. In addition, countries should ensure that proper care is available for victims of human trafficking, including safe shelter and medical and psychological care.

Let me finally move to my third issue, prosecution after conflict. In view of the enormous human suffering traffickers cause, their impunity is simply intolerable. Together, we should join forces to investigate and hold traffickers accountable. This requires strengthening legal frameworks at the national level. These frameworks must of course be in line with international standards. The international community should continue to assist countries that lack the capacities to do so.

Capacity-building is also crucial when it comes to training national law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and lawyers. In that regard, let me commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for all the capacity-building it is doing worldwide to end impunity for human traffickers.

In conclusion, under the Spanish presidency the Council unanimously adopted resolutions 2331 (2016), on human trafficking in conflict. The importance of implementing the resolution and other international conventions cannot be overestimated. Together, we should redouble our efforts to cooperate to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to continue to be a partner in this endeavour.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the International Labour Organization.

Mr. Homayounpour: As we have heard many times today, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour. This represents about 3 in every 1,000 of today's world population. Forced sexual exploitation accounts for 22 per cent of all victims, whereas forced labour exploitation makes up 68 per cent of the total. This is a huge business. In fact in 2014 estimates indicated that it generates annual profits of $150 billion. Two-thirds of the estimated total, or $99 billion, came from commercial sexual exploitation, while another $51 billion resulted from forced economic exploitation, including domestic work, agriculture and other economic activities.

In June 2014, the International Labour Organization adopted a legally binding Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (No. 29), designed to tackle modern forms of forced labour and strengthen global efforts for their elimination. The Protocol, supported by a recommendation, was adopted by Governments, employers and worker delegates to the International Labour Conference. The Protocol strengthens the international legal framework by creating new obligations to prevent forced labour, to protect victims and to provide access to remedy, such as compensation for material and physical harm. It requires Governments to take measures to better protect workers, in particular migrant labourers, from fraudulent and abusive recruitment practices, and emphasizes the role of employers and workers in the fight against forced labour. The Protocol is now open for ratification, and I am happy to report 13 ratifications thus far, including that of the United Kingdom.

It is very clear that everyone has a role to play in fighting modern slavery and that unless we all come together and unite against it, we are going to face an uphill battle. That is why the ILO, with many partners, has facilitated the creation of Alliance 8.7. A partnership of partnerships, as it is called, Alliance 8.7 is a coalition committed to accelerating and intensifying actions to tackle the problems of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour, thereby contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8.7. I invite all to join the Alliance and help improve coordination and joint action, which, as we have heard over and over again today, remain real challenges in this area of work.

The ILO is also creating a global business network against forced labour and human trafficking to work with employers and the private sector in ensuring that slavery does not infiltrate supply chains. We at the ILO look forward to continuing and expanding our work together in combatting such violations of human rights.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.